



*Four Portraits
of the
Lord Jesus Christ*



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FOUR PORTRAITS

OF THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST

*Some Suggestions for
Young Christians beginning to study
the Gospels*

✓
By GEORGE SOLTAU

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FOREWORD.

BY C. I. SCOFIELD, D.D.

HAVING had the privilege of reading the advance sheets of "Four Portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ," by Rev. George Soltau, it gives me pleasure to commend it unreservedly. Of the making of "Lives of Christ," there is no end; but they all have the grave defect of incompleteness. The materials for a life of Christ do not exist. Four men, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote four books, known as the Gospels, in which they presented the one Personality in His four great characters; but it was no part of their purpose to write a narrative biography. It is not possible to produce such a biography from the fragmentary accounts which they give of His words and works. The harmonists are in hopeless disagreement.

But the harmonized Lives of Christ not only fail of necessity to tell the great story—they serve but to confuse the divine intent in the four Gospels. They give a blur, and not a portrait. They have the effect of a composite photograph.

There is, therefore, need for this book. Helped by its suggestions, the student of the four Gospels will be brought into a clear vision of the Christ in the four ways in which He stands related to God and man; and through which He works out, in ordered beauty and perfectness, the divine purpose.

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MANY NAMES ARE DEAR.

Many names are dear, but His is dearer;
How it grows more dear as life goes on!
Many friends are near, but He is nearer,
Always what we want and all our own.

Jesus, Jesus, let us ever say it
Softly to ourselves as some sweet spell;
Jesus, Jesus, troubled spirit, lay it
On thy heart and it will make thee well.

In the hour of gloom it shines before us,
Like that welcome star that gilds the morn;
Vanished hope and joy it will restore us,
Till their sudden rays our soul adorn.

Jesus! Jesus! in the home of glory,
Still that lovely name shall tune our lays,
Jesus! Jesus! all the wondrous story
Of His love shall fill eternal days.

P. SKENE.

FOUR PORTRAITS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IT has pleased God to give us, in His Word, four narratives of the earthly life of His Son the Lord Jesus, as contained in the four Gospels. These four portraits are drawn by four different men, who present them to us from four different standpoints of vision. It has long been a practice for Bible students to attempt to draw up a harmony of the four Gospels. While this is, no doubt, very interesting, yet is it not obvious that the object of the Holy Spirit, in giving us four such distinct narratives, is to fix attention on the individual features presented by each writer, rather than to enable us to draw up a consecutive history of the words and works of the Son of God? There will be considerable profit and blessing resulting from a study of these four separately, seeking to discover what may be the distinctive features in each case, and what may be the lessons the spirit of God would have us learn from them. In handling this subject, one must necessarily go over much ground that is familiar to many. To almost

all, it will be known that St. Matthew represents the Lord as the KING; St. Mark as the SERVANT OF GOD; St. Luke as the SON OF MAN; while St. John presents Him as the SON OF GOD.

The four faces of the Cherubim seem to have a direct reference to this fact, in that they correspond with these four features, thus: The Lion is the symbol of St. Matthew's Gospel, that animal being the king of beasts; the Ox represents the servant of St. Mark's Gospel; the Man that of St. Luke; while the Eagle, for its keen vision and swift flight, represents St. John's portrait of the Lord.

HIS HEADSHIP MAY NEXT BE GLANCED AT IN ITS FOUR CONNECTIONS.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, it is to be over the Jewish race; in St. Mark's, over the Church, to be composed of those whom He has touched and delivered by His healing, saving power; in St. Luke's, it is to be over the whole human race, for He is the Son of Man over all men; while St. John shews Him to be "Head over all things." He is to hold the sceptre of universal empire.

Four prophecies are found in the Old Testament, in each of which the Lord is described as THE BRANCH. It is interesting to note how these four have an apparent connection with the features of the four Gospels, now under consideration. In Jer.

xxiii. 5, we read, "*Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH, and He shall reign as KING, and deal wisely, and shall execute judgment and justice in the land.*" A similar passage is found in Jer. xxxiii. 15, "*In these days and at that time will I cause a Branch of Righteousness to grow up unto David: and He shall execute Judgment and righteousness in the land.*" This prophecy had a partial fulfilment as recorded by St. Matthew, but awaits FUL-filment.

Then in Zech. iii. 8, we find the words, "*Behold, I will bring forth My SERVANT the BRANCH.*" This fits over St. Mark's portrait of the patient, diligent Servant of God.

In Zech. vi. 12, again, "*Behold the MAN whose name is the BRANCH, and He shall grow up out of His place.*" This prophecy is in accordance with what St. Luke portrays in his Gospel—the wonderful man amongst men, growing up from infancy, and moving amongst men.

Lastly, in Isaiah iv. 2: "*In that day, shall the BRANCH OF JEHOVAH be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.*" The glorious Son of God of St. John's Gospel shall return yet, and reveal Himself as the Son of God from heaven, in the eyes of His ancient people, who, at His first coming, rejected Him and refused to own Him.

In the two portraits which present Him as specially identified with the human race, there are two genealogies given. St. Matthew, writing for Jews, gives His descent from Abraham and David. These are the two most important names to a Jewish mind. If the eye shall catch sight of these two names at the very beginning of the narrative, may not the Jewish reader be induced to pursue his reading of the story of such a descendant? Then St. Luke gives the genealogy back to Adam, shewing how the Saviour belongs to all the race, and not exclusively to one nation.

The Servant needs no genealogy, for He is known by the character and quality of His work, and the Gospel of St. Mark opens with the voice from heaven, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" This is God's commendation of the Servant to all who shall need Him to serve them, in His infinite grace.

St. John seems to see Him coming out from the very bosom of the Father, and introduces Him as being "*in the beginning with God,*" and says He "*was God.*" He comes from eternity, suddenly appearing upon the sphere of human existence, "*the Word made flesh,*" and after the life lived and the ministry wrought, as St. John records it, He returns as suddenly back to that place of eternal holi-

ness and light, the bosom of the Father. Nothing is said of Bethlehem or Nazareth, or Jerusalem or of the Mount of Olives. He has come as God—He has gone as God. He is the Son of God equal with the Father, the Word who was from the beginning, who is so still, and who ever will be.

THE PORTRAIT AS DRAWN BY ST. MATTHEW

is, as we have said, specially for his own nation. He shews at the very outset that He is the rightful claimant to the throne of David, by proving the direct descent of Jesus of Nazareth from David. That throne remains unclaimed from that day to the present, and will never be claimed by any but Jesus, because He alone can prove His lawful rights to succeed. No other Jew has ever since been able to produce his genealogy. There had been no claimant for 600 years before; there has been none for 1900 years since. Notice the four women mentioned, in that first chapter, as identified with the ancestry of Christ: Thamar—whose name is associated with gross sin; Rahab—a Gentile, a heathen, and a harlot; Ruth—a Moabitess, a heathen, and therefore one who had no right in the congregation of Israel; and the wife of Uriah, an adulteress. Sin, sorrow and shame are all here interwoven into this story; because the Son of God came to bear away our sin and sorrow, and to be truly the Son of man. "*Verily,*

not of angels doth He take hold; but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii. 16). "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. vii. 14). He is the Root and Offspring of David; He is the Rod of the stem of Jesse; and the Branch out of his roots (Isa. xi. 1). He is the Root out of the dry ground (Isa. liii. 2). In the Old Testament, this was prophecy; in the Gospel of Matthew, it is history. It is never lost sight of that Jesus of Nazareth is the King of the Jews. By many, it is supposed that this title is extinct, but it is not. Rev. v. 5 proves this, where He is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. On the throne, as seen by the apostle, long after His ascension, His position and title are acknowledged in heaven, and in virtue of that title, He steps forward to take the book and to open the seals—the title-deeds to His lawful possession of earth. For further confirmation of this truth in this Gospel, the various names by which He is called in the earlier chapters may be collated, and considered in this connection.

A KING must govern, must be able to deliver His kingdom from its enemies, must make and enforce laws, must demand and receive obedience, otherwise He cannot reign as King. How, then, shall He be treated? Shall He be received and acclaimed? shall He be enthroned? shall He be obeyed? shall His control be submitted to? These are the ques-

tions which this Gospel practically asks and answers, revealing His undoubted claims to the place that was declared to be His, giving His utterances as King, and then describing how He was treated by His own nation, how He came unto His own but His own received Him not. The Gospel, however, closes with His own words as to His return, as King, to the very nation that would not have Him, and how His coming would be for their salvation, when He should come with all the holy angels. In the meantime, He bade His disciples remember that He had all power both in heaven and on earth. The opening question of the Gospel is in ii. 2: "*Where is He that is born King of the Jews?*" and the closing statement from His own lips, as He ascends, with the marks of the rejection by His own nation in His person, are, "*ALL power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth*" (xxviii. 18).

Do we now call Him our King? If so, are we careful to find out His commandments, in order that we may obey them? It is not enough to say, "*Make Jesus King!*" It must be done literally by loyal obedience, so that others may see that we are under another monarchy than that of this world.

THE PORTRAIT AS DRAWN BY ST. MARK
is for the Romans, who were the governing people
at that time. He so weaves his narrative as to divest

it of special Jewish features, explaining terms that might not be usually understood, and presenting this One, not as a king, but as the Servant of God, One to serve men of all classes, who are in need and trouble. He seems to say to all his readers, "Look at this One working for you, living for you, suffering for you, dying for you, rising for you. Greater is He than any god you ever worshipped or heard of, coming in close touch with all the necessities of the multitudes, with the utmost sympathy and tenderness. He appears as the true Priest amongst men, dealing with the great question of SIN, able to understand sinners, their guilt, their shame, their weakness. Engage Him, submit to Him, work with Him, work for Him, confide in Him. God sends Him to do for you what you cannot do for yourself."

Roman thought was accustomed to the idea of *power*, not service, as the symbol of true greatness. God will teach the true fact of greatness in the life of lowly service and ministry.

Notice the first miracle that St. Mark records. It is the casting out of an unclean spirit in a synagogue. This is the great power of Satan, which no one can resist of himself. Jesus comes to save, to work the work of God in deliverances, and that in most unlikely ways and in most unlikely places. The chief question will be, Is He competent? can He do what

I need? He will require such patience, such forbearance, such sympathy, such strength, such knowledge! Then hear His character from God: "*My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*" Long ago, He was God's Master-workman. "When He established the heavens I was there then I was by Him as a master-workman. I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him Therefore, hearken unto Me, My sons" (Prov. viii. 27-30).

The opening question in the Gospel is that of i. 27, "*What is this? a new teaching! With authority, He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.*" It had never been so seen before. Lifeless, powerless synagogue services, conducted with due formality! But here was a Teaching that accomplished something: it disclosed the unsuspected power and presence of the enemy, and then dislodged him. Here was service, here was work that touched need, and met it. But how was He spoken of? In vi. 3 is another question, "*Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon, and are not His sisters here with us?*" That is all that many thought of Him and said of Him, and so refused to let Him work the works of God for them and in them. The closing statement in xvi. 17—"The Lord also working with them"—harmonizes with the opening thought. Though risen and glorified, yet He is still the

Worker, the Servant of Jehovah, to save, succour, and help the needy. He is the same now as when here on earth yet how different. Though His work on earth is finished, for xvi. 19 tells us "*He sat down on the right hand of God,*" yet His unfinished work of serving continues, through the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, while in heaven He ever lives to make intercession for us.

THE PORTRAIT AS DRAWN BY ST. LUKE

is for the Greek-speaking peoples. Here we see Him as the Man, entering the world as you and I did: growing up in it, working for His daily bread, shewing the intensely human side of His character; tenderness, compassion, readiness to help, fearlessness, courage, sternness against sin, but such tenderness to those who were the victims of sin. He was always talking so much of God, and of the love of God, that they all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. He is a man! therefore confide in Him, trust Him, make Him your friend; let Him eat and drink with you; take Him into your house, into your councils, into everything. He is perfectly human, as well as Divine.

He is a Prophet! He bears a message from God; listen to Him. Such a man, as a prophet, must be

perfectly fearless, very attractive and interesting, and must be able to come in touch with every-day, work-a-day life. He must be able to adapt Himself easily and equally to every class of society, with the utmost grace of manner, ease and skill. He must not be "condescending" to those who may think themselves socially beneath Him, neither must He be seeking the patronage of those who may think themselves above Him. He must be quite in touch with all human surroundings. Hence, this portrait will be found to be exquisitely beautiful from the human side of things.

The story opens with certain family portraits; His mother, her cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zacharias, the aged Priest in the Temple. Then we find old Simeon and the aged prophetess Anna, and His own cousin John the Baptist. On almost the first page, you have an inn, sheep, shepherds, and angels, too. Heaven and earth mingling because some one from heaven has arrived on earth in a most interesting and human way. The Boy—so obedient at home, the Learner, the Questioner, intelligent, earnest! What interesting questions He asked! what a charming boy to talk with! It is Jesus.

A Prophet is He? He must know God intimately. He must know man intimately. He must put into

human language the thoughts of God, as far as they can be reduced to language. He must be quite fearless on three points :

First. In describing sin and its consequences. We must know the worst.

Second. In describing God's righteous dealing with sin. There must be no uncertainty here.

Third. In describing God's dealing with a sinner.

(Here we must distinguish between Sin and the Sinner. Sin must meet with holy, righteous wrath and indignation. God would *de-tach* sin from the sinner, in order thus to deal with it. This is the offer of the Gospel. Then God would *at-tach* that sinner to Himself, and make him an heir of glory, lavishing on him all His eternal love and grace. If the sinner refuses the treatment offered, God has no alternative but to deal with the sin and sinner together).

The Gospel is full of narratives, not found elsewhere, that illustrate all these points, and also shew His exceeding kindness, sympathy, and love for all around. The story opens with song, continues with song, and closes with song. By contrast, St. Matthew opens with the wail of the stricken, bereaved mothers, and closes with Woe, woe, woe! There is no song in that Gospel. How could there be? It

is the story of sorrow and sin in the rejection of the King. St. Luke gives the story of the Saviour and His salvation.

The opening question is in ii. 49: "*Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?*" and the book is full of how He went about doing it. Then the closing words are in xxiv. 51: "*While He blessed them.*" He ended with His Father's business as He had begun, and He is still occupied in the same way.

THE PORTRAIT AS DRAWN BY ST. JOHN.

This Apostle gathers up all the features of the other three, namely, that Jesus is Prophet, Priest and King, and combining them all, gives the additional features of the DEITY and DIVINITY of the Lord. It is a Full-length Portrait.

Is He a King? Then Nathaniel's utterance confirms it: "*Thou art the King of Israel*" (i. 49), and His own utterance in xviii. 37, "*To this end was I born.*"

Is He a Servant? He walked to Samaria to serve a poor, unhappy, sinful woman. He walked to Bethesda to look for a helpless man and give him strength. He laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself, and washed the disciples' feet. It is the lowliest act of service as a man amongst men.

He was pictured as a - - - like that. W.L.C.

Is He a Man? He was wearied with His journey. He was thirsty, and asked for water. He needed food. He loved. He groaned. He wept. And is that man a Prophet? Such utterances concerning God and sin, as recorded by St. John, are found in no other writing.

But what more does this apostle tell us? That He dwelt in the bosom of the Father—(at Nazareth, say Matthew and Luke). That He was sent by the Father, and came from the bosom of the Father—(that he was born in a manger and fled to Egypt, say the others). That the Will of God was behind all He did and said on every occasion—(that He was full of compassion, and pity, and grace, say the others). That the World was the range of His vision—“*God so loved the world,*” “*He came into the world,*” “*To bear the sin of the world,*” “*The world could not contain the books that should be written*”—(Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Perea, Tyre, Sidon, say the others).

The opening question of this Gospel is in i. 38, “*Master, where dwellest Thou?*” and near the close amongst the last words are these in xv. 4: “*Abide in ME, and I IN YOU.*” It is the new abiding place, where any one may meet Him who enquires of Him.

And what are the impressions that St. John makes? “This is MY Lord Jesus Christ. I have

leaned on His bosom. I have seen Him. I wish all my friends knew Him! I wish my country knew Him! I wish the WORLD knew Him!

NOT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST, BUT CHRIST FOR THE WORLD.

The Four Portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ

	ST. MATTHEW.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
1. The Portrait	The King	The Servant	The Man	The Son of God.
2. The Symbol	The Lion	The Ox	The Man	The Eagle.
3. The Prophecy "Branch."	Jer. xxiii. 5.	Zech. iii. 11	Zech. vi. 12	Is. iv. 2.
4. His Headship	Head of Jewish Race	Head of the Church	Head of Human Race	Head Over All Things
5. Genealogy	Traced to Abraham.	None	Traced to Adam	None.
6. For Whom Written	For Jews	For Romans	For Greeks	For the World.
7. Opening Question	Where is He That is Born, King of the Jews? ii. 2	What is This? A New Teaching! i. 27	Wist ye not that I Must be about my Father's Business? ii. 49	Where dwellest Thou? i. 38.
8. Closing Statement	All Power is Given Unto Me. xxviii. 18	The Lord Also Working With Them. xvi. 17	While He blessed them. xxiv. 51	Abide in me, and I in you. xv. 4.
9. How Introduced	By Genealogy	By Character	By Family Surroundings	As from Eternity.
10. Sphere of His Work	House of Israel	The Needy	The Human Race	The Individual Soul.
11. The Writer Writes	From Personal Impressions	From Another's Impressions	From Others' Impressions	From Personal Impressions.
12. The Scope	Dispensational	Narrative	Biographical	Demonstrative.

The Name best known. The Person least known. "He is before all things and by Him all things consist."

CHAPTER II.

ST. MATTHEW: THE KING.

THE DIVISIONS, KEYWORDS, SCOPE.

Behold your king.—John xix. 14.

THE AUTHOR.

THE writer of this Gospel was a Galilean, Matthew by name, having also a Jewish name, Levi. The corresponding Latin name would be Theodore, meaning Gift of God. He was a business man, accustomed to the use of the pen, but engaged in a business hated by his countrymen, that of tax-collector for the Roman Government, and therefore estranged from his nation, and likely to wield no influence, amongst them, for good. His call to follow the Lord is briefly recorded by himself in chapter ix. 9. It must be inferred that he had had some previous knowledge of the Lord, and that this interview was by no means the first. One wonders whether he might not have been among the tax-gatherers who attended John the Baptist's mission (Luke iii. 12), and there received his first impressions. He was evidently a man of decision, for he acted immediately, rose up, left all, and followed Jesus. So thorough was the change from the habits of the old

life to the new, that he made a great feast for all his old business associates, which St. Luke describes as for a great company of tax-gatherers, sinners, and others. It was a splendid start, a clean cut with all the past, and a *definite act of committal* to the new leader and the new associations. If the *call* was his *conversion*, the *feast* was his *consecration*. The other fact about him is that he became one of the Apostles; x. 3 is his own record, and he mentions that he had been a tax-gatherer, not being ashamed to refer to "the hole of the pit from whence he had been digged." The only other thing we know about him personally is that he wrote this Gospel, which has been probably more blessed to Jewish readers than any other section of the New Testament. The main argument in his writing is that all that has happened to Jesus of Nazareth has been fulfilment of Scripture, and, therefore, should appeal pre-eminently to the nation, "whose are the oracles of God," convincing them that Jesus is Messiah. Nothing that occurred was accidental. "*For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven*" (Psa. cxix. 89). The Jews were well versed in their Scriptures. They professed to base all their hopes upon them, and they claimed to understand them. Hence, the blindness, both of heart and will, in rejecting Him who so evidently, before their eyes, was daily accomplishing Scripture.

It will well repay the time and trouble expended to study out the interweaving of Old Testament Scripture in the fabric of this book. It is the connecting link between the old and new dispensations, and, therefore, stands first in the canon of the New Testament. Similarly, the first epistle, that to the Romans, is one which, setting forth clearly God's way of saving a sinner, is found to be composed of a large amount of Old Testament Scripture. This is an important fact because the faith of many in these Scriptures is threatened and undermined, and it is well to see the value attached to them by the Holy Spirit. The life of our Lord upon earth, His death, resurrection, and ascension, together with the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, have their origins and roots in prediction. If, therefore, the prediction be believed to be inaccurate and uninspired, that which is constructed from it will be mistrusted also. Sweep away the foundations, and the whole fabric must disappear.

CHARACTERISTIC PHRASES.

The following phrases are characteristic of St. Matthew: "*That it might be fulfilled.*" "*It is written.*" "*It hath been said to them of old time.*" "*Have ye never read?*" Taking the first of these, it will be found to occur fourteen times, and in con-

nection with the following books: Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Zechariah. "*It is written,*" will be found NINE times, and "*It hath been said to them of old time,*" SIX times. Putting the two phrases together, being so similar in thought, we shall find that the following books are referred to: Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi. One of these references is that made by the devil in the "Temptation," to the 91st Psalm. "*Have ye never read?*" is used by the Lord Himself six times in his controversies with the Pharisees, who claimed to be the custodians and expositors of Scripture. It was, therefore, his way of rebuking their ignorance of what they professed to be so well versed in. He referred them to Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Samuel, Psalms, and Isaiah. In addition to the foregoing, there will be found six distinct quotations from Exodus, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, and Hosea, and between FORTY and FIFTY allusions to the foregoing books, and also to Kings, Chronicles, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jonah. In all, it will be found that nineteen books of the Old Testament are required for the structure of St. Matthew's Gospel—the Pentateuch, three historical, two poetical, and nine prophetic—and that the Holy Spirit has put His hand upon Scripture from Genesis to Malachi, to obtain the necessary material for this writing. This fact should strengthen faith and re-

new confidence in the verity and accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Fifteen characters are referred to in this book, namely: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, Queen of Sheba, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Jonah, and Zacharias. This, of course, does not include the names in the genealogy in the first chapter.

THE DIVISIONS.

For the purpose of study, the book may be divided as follows:

- (a) Introduction: Genealogy, Birth, Forerunner (i-iii. 12).
- (b) Ministry in Galilee, prefaced by the Baptism (iii. 13-xvi. 20).
- (c) Crucifixion prepared for and accomplished, prefaced by Transfiguration (xvi. 21-xxviii).

Another suggested definition is:

- (a) Preparation (i-iv. 16).
- (b) Proclamation (iv. 17-xvi. 20).
- (c) Propitiation (xvi. 21-xxviii).

The six great facts are Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension. These are the "*crises of the Christ.*"

THE TOPIC.

The great topic of the book is the Arrival amongst, Proclamation to, Rejection of the King, by the nation to whom He came, and to whom He belonged. Bear in mind how strictly Jewish are the surroundings of this narrative, and, therefore, how Jewish will be the style of the Lord's discourses, five of which are given. The APPLICATION of much of what the Lord said to our present time and state is another line of study equally full of profit. We must further remember that though He was rejected, yet in no way have His claims abated, or the purposes of God been frustrated. He must return, if only to take the throne of David and fulfil the Scriptures, and the nation to whom He belongs must receive and acclaim Him here on earth, as foretold. There is a spiritual kingdom; there is also a visible and actual kingdom. The same principles of righteousness will be found in both, but the one does not do away with the other. "*Now we see not yet all things put under Him,*" but we believers see Him spiritually as our Lord and King.

The topic, then, being the King, we shall find the word "*king*" applied to the Lord Jesus fourteen times. Then the word "*kingdom*" will be found seventeen times; the phrase, "*kingdom of heaven,*" thirty-two times, and the phrase, "*kingdom of God,*"

five times. In all, these words are found sixty-eight times in the twenty-eight chapters. The word of a king is authoritative. "I say unto you," is His oft-repeated phrase, and occurs fifty-four times in the narrative. These should be looked out and underlined. How grating must this phrase have sounded in the ears of His enemies, who disputed His rights and claims to the Messiahship, as He put His own utterances alongside those of the Holy Spirit in olden time, and claimed for them the same authority and position as for the words of God from Mount Sinai. This would be nothing less than blasphemy from any human lips, and it is not surprising that He was accused of such blasphemy.

CHAPTER HEADINGS, SHEWING THE SCOPE.

In order to see clearly the scope of the book, and to be able to retain in the memory the main outline, it is found of the greatest service to select a title for each chapter, commit it to memory, and also have it written in over each chapter. In this way, the contents of the chapter can be associated with the title given, and the mind is helped in further meditation. We shall select a title for each chapter, illustrating the fact that it is *the portrait of the King* we are considering.

Chap. i. PEDIGREE OF THE KING. This gives

the line of succession from David and Abraham, and proves His lineage.

Chap. ii. HOMAGE TO THE KING. The wise men have arrived, guided by Scripture and by the star. The gifts are royal—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Though finding Him in a stable, they are in no way disconcerted, but worship the infant Jesus by faith. The gift of gold was opportune, inasmuch as God had foreseen the speedy, rapid flight into Egypt, where Joseph would be unable to maintain his family as at Nazareth, and thus are all expenses met!

Chap. iii. HERALDING THE KING. The Forerunner appears and commences his six months' ministry of preparation, preaching, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,*" and fulfilling Old Testament predictions.

Chap. iv. THE KING IN CONFLICT. He has invaded the dominion of His great foe, in order to recover possession of it lawfully. At the very threshold, therefore, He will meet His foe alone in single combat, who will commence to try issues with Him.

The "Temptation" shall be met by Him in the strength alone by which every disciple afterwards shall meet temptation. His only weapon shall be the Scriptures that are in the hands of His people. Filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and with the Sword of the Spirit, He fights and conquers. Un-

weakened by the conflict, He proceeds to the call of some of His disciples, and to the opening of His ministry among the people.

Chaps. v., vi., vii. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM. These three chapters contain what is popularly known as The Sermon on the Mount. Careful reading will disclose that the words were addressed to the disciples, as the inner circle of His followers, and not to the crowd that was allowed to gather and listen, and that they were meant for *their special instruction and guidance*. As He taught them, the crowds gathered up and listened to all He said. But He did not alter the subject of His discourse in order to adapt it to the crowd. The utterances remain as the private instructions given to the disciples concerning the principles and laws that would be put into force when the kingdom should be established, of which He was the predicted Head. Could the disciples then and there carry out those principles? Certainly not; their conduct afterwards shewed how they could not and did not. The King was not enthroned, the Kingdom was not actually set up. He was being rejected all the time by the nation; therefore, what He had come to enact and establish cannot be put into force until the nation shall accept Him as King. In the meantime, the Church of God is to study these wonderful words, and learn from them the principles of obedience to His rule, of

righteousness on earth, and of the regulation of conduct both toward God and man.

Chaps. viii. and ix. **SAMPLES OF THE POWER OF THE KING.** Here are grouped ten samples of what the King can do over the six great foes of mankind—Sickness, Sin, Satanic power, Death, Sorrow and Storms. Just as the three previous chapters collect the great utterances, so these two chapters collect these specimens of His power. The writer wants to impress on his Jewish readers that there has been every possible proof, both in His words and works, that this Nazarene was none other than the predicted Messiah of their nation.

Chap. x. **LIMITED PROCLAMATION OF THE KING.** The twelve are sent out with special instructions not to go to any but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The proclamation is limited to them, inasmuch as this visit is preparatory to His own visit amongst them, to announce Himself as their Messiah. Through the nation would God make known to the world the great plan of salvation, therefore to the nation first the King comes, with His offers of righteous rule and delivering power.

Chap. xi. **THE KING'S FORERUNNER IN PRISON.** If the herald is in prison, then the outlook is dark for the King Himself. This was the fact evidently perceived by John the Baptist, hence the sending

the two disciples making enquiry, "*Art thou He that should come?*" Possibly he had not just then fully grasped that he must run on ahead of his Master, even unto, and into, death. He had proclaimed Him as the Lamb of God, and he knew that He would be the sin bearer; he had also proclaimed Him as the one Who would baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire. But it appears that he had hardly grasped the application to himself personally as the forerunner preparing the way—all the way; hence, those wonderful words sent him by the Lord, "*Blessed is he who-soever shall not be offended in Me,*" meaning, Happy is the man who is not scandalized by the way I may see fit to treat him, but who trusts Me on through all dark circumstances, knowing I am the Son of God, and that all is right and well. What comfort to come to the heart of the distracted, suffering, faithful forerunner!

Chap. xii. THE KING OFFICIALLY REJECTED. This is an important chapter, as marking a crisis in the history of the Lord. In verses 14 and 15, the first official council was held that determined upon His death. Up to that point, He had been preaching the "*Kingdom of heaven is at hand,*" but now this must cease. Action is commenced against Him which will culminate in the national rejection and the cross, and He immediately changes His methods of teaching and work. He has been compared to

Beelzebub, and dark satanic power is attributed to Him. Most wisely and graciously, He meets the opposition and anger, proving the impossibility of the statements made about Him, warning His foes and at the same time teaching His friends. But He must change His method in consequence, and therefore He withdraws, and recommences His teaching in parabolic form.

Chap. xiii. THE KINGDOM IN MYSTERY. Here begin the series of parables which describe the new phase of the kingdom of heaven consequent on the forthcoming national rejection of the King, and which give the outline of the future events in the spiritual realm, between the facts of the King rejected, and the King accepted, at the Second Advent. (These will form a separate study.)

Chap. xiv. THE COMPASSION OF THE KING. The feeding of the 5,000 is the central event in this chapter.

Chap. xv. THE KING RECOGNIZED BY A GENTILE. After the conflict with the Pharisees, which has shewn up their ignorance of the meaning of Scripture, the Lord is cheered by the Gentile suppliant who saw further with the eye of faith than did these teachers of the law.

Chap. xvi. THE KING DENIED BY MANY, OWNED BY A FEW. Here, for the first time, occurs the new

word CHURCH, which was to mean so much afterwards. The kingdom rejected, to be followed by a new association of believers, not forming a kingdom so much as being introduced into a hitherto unrevealed relationship to the Lord, higher and more glorious than that of being merely in the kingdom. The full facts of the Church were not revealed till later to the Apostle Paul, after the last offer had been made, through the Apostles, to the Jewish nation, of the *kingdom*, through the descent of the Holy Spirit, and rejected.

Chap. xvii. THE KING IN ROYAL ATTIRE. That sign which had been demanded in unbelief by Pharisees, to prove that Jesus was Messiah, was granted to the three disciples in the Mount of Transfiguration. Note the reference to it of one spectator, in 2 Peter i.

Chap. xviii. THE KING AND THE LITTLE ONES. Very unlike their ideas of the way to enter the kingdom was the teaching given to the disciples, followed by the discourse on forgiveness and the parable of the unforgiving servant.

Chap. xix. REWARDS FOR FOLLOWING THE KING. So utterly had all the hopes, in the hearts of the disciples, faded, with regard to the establishment of the visible kingdom predicted by David and Isaiah, that the Lord points out to them that there are higher

and greater things to be obtained, as the reward of faith, than even earthly promotion and position. The young ruler was an illustration of the power of things temporal and visible over things unseen and spiritual.

Chap. xx. **CONDITION OF GREATNESS IN THE KING'S SERVICE.** The difficult parable of the penny-a-day labourers is followed by the request, by the mother of James and John, for best seats in the kingdom. They have all failed to grasp the significance of events transpiring around them, and no wonder, seeing the whole of their outlook was being slowly destroyed, and the Master was more often talking of His approaching death than of any outward triumph.

Chap. xxi. **THE KING'S BRIEF HOUR OF TRIUMPH.** A sudden transient gleam of hope shot out of the increasing darkness in the fulfilment of the prophecy, "*Behold, thy KING cometh unto thee!*" Now surely the tide of popular and official feeling will turn! But Jesus knew otherwise, and hence the significance of the parable of the unfaithful husbandmen, which He gave, the next day, in the temple courts, warning the disciples of what they might expect to happen.

Chap. xxii. **THE KING CROSS-QUESTIONED.** Always a dangerous process for the questioners. He was the wisdom of God, and can bring to nought

the wisdom of the world. Again the controversy focussed round the Messiahship of Jesus in the closing question, asked this time by the Lord Himself. And no one was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask Him any more questions. The whole position was insoluble to the multitudes and to the leaders of the nation. The mystery of the atonement was about to loom up in the foreground, which will be impenetrable darkness to the majority, and, indeed, to almost every one, until after the day of Pentecost.

Chap. xxiii. THE KING'S DENUNCIATIONS. He began with *blessed*, He ends with *woe*. Why? It is the inevitable consequence of the refusal of the offered kingdom. Nothing but woe can result. And how awfully true has been this fact in the history of the nation all down the centuries. They have never reversed the verdict then given; hence the perpetual falling of these solemn woes. The King has power to bless, and, equally, power to judge. He must be known in one of the two ways. Each one can choose which way.

Chap. xxiv. THE KING A PROPHET. Privately, He announces to disciples the new hope and future purpose in the Second Advent. But at the same time, He faithfully sketches the history of the nation from the very day He was speaking, down to the

great climax for which we are still waiting in holy expectation.

Chap. xxv. THE KING AS BRIDEGROOM, ADMINISTRATOR AND JUDGE. These three great utterances conclude the record of the teaching of the Lord, and the final word is, "*When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him.*" At the commencement of the Gospel, it will be found that Satan suggested this very event in the Temptation, trying to forestall the fulfilment of the prophecy, and so prevent the great triumph over himself and the powers of darkness. But what he then suggested and quoted Scripture in support of, will yet take place, but before a vaster audience, and for far greater purposes.

Chap. xxvi. THE KING ANOINTED, BETRAYED, FORSAKEN.

Chap. xxvii. THE KING TRIED AND CONDEMNED.

Chap. xxviii. THE KING RISEN AND ASCENDED.

The book begins with the arrival of the King in Bethlehem, according to prophecy, and concludes with the removal of the King from the land to which He came, according to prophecy, to await the purpose of God in His return, according to prophecy. In the meantime, we who know Him, trust Him, and confess Him, are to watch and wait for Him, being diligent, that we may be found blameless at His ap-

pearing, and ever remembering how His heart yearns for the nation for which He has died, and to which He is to come as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Messiah, and the glorious BRANCH.

CHAPTER III.

ST. MATTHEW: THE KING.

THE KING'S FIVE PROCLAMATIONS.

THE Gospel is built round the five great proclamations that the writer has recorded. They are as follows:

1. Chaps. v. vi. vii. The New Law. The King a Lawgiver.
2. Chap. x. The New Mission. The King a Saviour.
3. Chap. xiii. The New Kingdom. The King Veiled.
4. Chaps. xvi. and xviii. The New Association. The King Present, Though Veiled.
5. Chap. xxiii.-xxv. The New Hope. The King a Judge.

I. THE NEW LAW. Chapters v. vi. vii.

Putting ourselves back into the trend of the times when these words were spoken, let us imagine ourselves of the nation of Israel, full of expectation and anxiety, resulting from the fiery and stirring preaching of John the Baptist, who had been declaring, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the

desert a highway for our God." "All were in expectation," St. Luke says, and "pondering what these portentous announcements might mean." To the few more enlightened, they would undoubtedly convey the impression that the long-expected Messiah would shortly appear, and begin to work out the deliverance of the nation from the Gentile yoke, and restore the kingdom as described by the Prophets and Psalmists. When, therefore, John the Baptist could announce, "HE HAS COME," all eyes were turned in the direction of the man of Nazareth, whom he pointed out as the Lamb of God, the One expected and predicted. What manner of man would He be? Naturally, all would expect a great and glorious One, with displays of supernatural power, that would soon put to flight the Roman legions, and free the country from the foreign domination. Instead of this, they saw one who, without any external display whatever, began a series of country visitations, preaching in a very unexpected manner, and contenting Himself with sundry works of mercy and kindness to the poor, diseased, afflicted, and outcast. He severely left alone all political and national questions, and never shewed Himself amongst the ruling classes. How could such an One be the Messiah? Where were the signs? Where were the appeals to the nation to rise and follow Him? The whole thing was utterly opposed to all Jewish conceptions, and

apparently to all the prophecies concerning the Messiah. It was perplexing, disappointing. Yet there was the inner circle of disciples drawn chiefly from the working classes, who were strangely attracted to Him, who believed Him, and who were sure that it would work out all right, and that He would prove to be all that their prophets had foretold. With these conflicting ideas and emotions, let us take our places in the inner circle, and listen to the Messiah as He begins to instruct them in the affairs of His kingdom. He had been preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" He evidently means to do something. What will He say and do? He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This was a little reassuring, for He was going to talk about the *kingdom*. Then there followed the remainder of the beatitudes, which contained some altogether unexpected words, such as persecute, speak falsely, mourn. This is not what they had expected, and is quite contrary to a successful campaign. So He began, and so He went on, saying nothing about the earthly kingdom and the throne, and the driving out of the Roman power.

Before the kingdom can be established, it will be necessary to promulgate the laws that will be enforced, and that will form the basis of the government; in fact, He must put forth the POLICY of the

new regime, and it turns out that He will make no appeal whatever to the popular imagination, or feeling, or sentiment, but, on the contrary, will be somewhat repellent rather than attractive. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." That was the secret that underlay this strange policy.

The keyword of this policy is **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. The new words that are introduced, and that strike attention, are "Blessed," "Father." They are more family words than kingdom words, and they must have sounded most strange. What will be the sphere of this new law? The Jewish nation? No, that is too limited! The Christian Church? No, that also is too limited. It is the law of the kingdom of heaven, that is, of all that professes to be under the rule of the King. The Jewish nation was only a fragment of a nation. The Church is a collection of individuals out of all nations. The kingdom is to include all nations: so then the law will go on after the Church has gone into her heavenly sphere, and will be the rule of the nations and of all who profess to be under this King. It is, however, first offered to this nation of the Jews, and to a section of them the Lord is, for the first time, explaining what will be the manner of the King and kingdom they are expecting. Will they like it? Will they accept it?

On examination, it will be found that this revelation from the Lord is a combination of grace and law. One of the weakest features in much so-called Gospel preaching today, is the elimination of law from the testimony, as though God had never given any revelation of what He required of His creatures; and, secondly, the elimination of law from the instructions given to those who accept the Gospel of His grace and receive the great salvation. The truth is, that if you accept the grace of the King, you must perforce take service, and be under the will and laws of the King. The teaching of Christ as King does not nullify one word of the previous declarations of God made to the fathers; it intensifies and expands them all. He said, "Think not I am come to destroy the law or prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (v. 17.) This is the key-note to the understanding of this proclamation of His policy.

The Divisions.

1. Chap. v. 3-16. Introductory.
2. Chap. v. 17-vii. 12. "The Law and Prophets."
3. Chap. vii. 1-27. Conclusion. Be decided—no compromise.

The introduction dispelled at once any ideas of preparation for a conflict. It was the out-breathing

of gentleness, love, and blessing, and gave the disciples their first impressions as to what kind of persons they were to be: salt and light, preservative and illuminating. The second division will fall into four sub-divisions, as follows:

(a) Chap. v. 17-48. Laws concerning the relationship of man to man, touching murder, adultery, perjury, theft, retribution.

(b) Chap. vi. 1-16. Laws referring to man's relationship to God in things spiritual, such as prayer, almsgiving, fasting.

(c) Chap. vi. 17-34. Laws referring to man's relationship to God in things temporal, such as food, clothing, money.

(d) Chap. vii. 1-12. Laws concerning man's right attitude towards God and man.

The whole section commences and terminates with an allusion to the law and prophets. "Think not I am come to destroy the law and prophets," and "This is the law and prophets." The eyes of the nation were upon the fulfilment of the great utterances of the prophets respecting the restoration of the kingdom to its original splendour under David's greater Son. If Messiah has truly come, He will begin to carry out the plans for such fulfilment. Messiah had come, but His eyes were upon the fulfilment of the Law first, without which nothing what-

ever in the prophets could be accomplished; for the kingdom must be established in righteousness, and there lay whole centuries of unrighteousness behind, for which the law had righteous claims which must be met. These claims, the leaders were determined to ignore, if, indeed, they were aware of their existence. So, then, the eyes of the nation and of Messiah were looking two different ways. What was meant by "fulfilment of the law?" Not merely living a righteous life, and being sinless, and, therefore, law-abiding, but having thus lived, offering Himself as the Atonement for sin, to become the Sin-bearer, and Sin-sacrifice on behalf of the guilty nation, and to fulfil the *claims* of the law against the law-breakers. Did not the long line of animal sacrifices suggest this? Had not John the Baptist announced this? All God's dealings with the nation had been based on the recognition of His holiness and their obedience to His laws; how, then, can the Messiah act otherwise but first see to the fulfilling of the law? His pronouncements in this fifth chapter prove how deeply He looked into things, and how He came not to deal with the *results* of sin as the Sinaitic law did, but with the *roots* of sin in the human heart. His work was to prevent sin beginning, not to prevent sin fruiting. For this, something must be accomplished before the kingdom, on such principles, can be established;

hence, His words, "I am come to fulfil the law." The old covenant had failed, and the promise was of the new covenant, in which God had said, "I will put My law in their hearts." When this should be accomplished, the regulations of the Sermon on the Mount could be carried out, but not before. He cannot unveil fully all the process then, but can only announce the principles of righteousness. Sin must be dealt with, guilt put away, and the new relationship entered into, hinted at by the introduction of the word "Father." Only, then, by the new birth would this be possible. The Jews expected a king to commence his reign in one way; Jesus announces that He must commence in another way, and because He would not yield to the nation, nor the nation to Him, they rejected Him, and condemned Him to death. Their action shewed the awful gulf between Himself and them; but God, through this very rejection, accomplished the purpose of Atonement, and Jesus on the cross put away the sin of the nation in their treatment of Him, and made forgiveness and reconciliation possible on repentance.

Now comes the oft-recurring question, Is it possible for us to fulfil the laws of the Sermon on the Mount? The principles of righteousness therein announced apply to all who have accepted Christ's fulfilment of law in the atonement for their sin, and

have put themselves under His rule. There must be a PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE of the King ere there can be such obedience as these laws require. The admission to His kingdom must be by the way appointed, namely, the New Birth. None others can enter or obey. Practically, the teaching of St. John iii. precedes that of St. Matthew v.

The rejection of the kingdom and the King by those to whom it was offered has, therefore, postponed the full and world-wide application of this proclamation, until the King shall return and be acknowledged and His fulfilment of the law in the atonement accepted as the basis of His rule and mercy. "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced," and then shall deliverance appear unto the oppressed and almost exterminated nation.

2. THE NEW MISSION. Chapter x.

Having thus privately taught the disciples the manner of the kingdom, the next thing was to send out the twelve to announce and proclaim it in all the towns and villages, "whither He Himself would come." They were sent out, authorized to preach exactly what the Lord Himself had preached, and to prove their authority by performing, in His name, the very same miracles as they had seen Him perform at the commencement of His ministry. It was

the first general proclamation of the kingdom. In chapter x. are found the instructions to them for this mission. With their ideas of how this kingdom was to be set up, how strange must have been the instructions given. The keyword of this proclamation is VARIANCE, the very reverse of what they were expecting. The new words are *freely, persecute, confess, suffer*. Not success, then, was promised, but opposition which would impinge specially on themselves. How strangely these words must have sounded. "Freely" is not a word pleasant to the Jewish mind; it was the original gospel word of the Garden of Eden: "Thou mayest freely eat." "Persecute!" Was not the Master going to *rule*? "Confess!" Easy when there is no opposition, but difficult when life is threatened. "Suffer!" How, today, that word needs to be remembered, in connection with the true Confession of Christ.

The divisions of the chapter may be taken thus:

(a) Verses 5-15, applying to the immediate sending forth of the twelve, and having no application to any later period.

(b) Verses 16-23. This section had its accomplishment after Pentecost, when they were brought before councils and judged for the sake of the truth they preached. The Lord's words intimated that the persecution would break out and scatter the

work before they would have gone through the cities of Israel, and such proved the case. Here the thread of the narrative is broken, and the remainder probably awaits fulfilment in the future, just before the return of the King.

(c) Verses 24-42. This section is of perpetual application, wherever the kingdom of heaven is preached and entered into. One member of a family coming under the new rules, finds himself, or herself, at variance with the rules of the household, and the peace of that family is broken. It always has been so; there is no help for it. Where Christ is accepted as LORD, His rules for holy living must come into force, and they are at enmity with the world. The Jewish mind only thought of earthly glory, victory, and the overthrow of enemies in connection with the kingdom. Here the Lord prepares disciples for opposition to His will, for successful persecution, for postponement, indefinitely, of the Messianic reign in glory, and bids them continue to confess Him at whatever cost of suffering, promising them a reward such as is not mentioned in the Old Testament prophecies.

With such instructions as these, the twelve went out, greatly wondering, no doubt, what the outcome would be, but yet so strangely constrained by His love and power. It was a message of salvation they

were to carry out, accompanied by proofs of the Divine authority of the Master. It was a message to individuals rather than to the nation.

The next chapter, namely, xi., contains the reference to John the forerunner in prison, sending the two disciples to enquire as to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. It is all in keeping with the object of Matthew's narrative to give the history of the rejected King. At the close of the chapter, will be found the woes pronounced on Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, for their special guilt in not receiving the Messiah. In chapter xii., there are two miracles recorded: the curing of the withered hand in the synagogue, and the casting out of a demon from a blind and dumb man. The opposition culminated round these two events in the first meeting of the council to decide on His death, and in the attributing His power for working miracles to Beelzebub. In His teaching, the Lord proves He is greater than the Sabbath, the cherished institution of the nation; greater than Jonah, the successful preacher to Nineveh, who turned that heathen city to repentance; greater than Solomon, the greatest of their monarchs for wisdom. Yet, in spite of all this, He has to bear such treatment from this "evil generation."

In Chapter xii., the first Crisis in the narrative is

reached. From Chapter i., there has been a crescendo movement, apparently. The King has come, proved to be the Son of David. His forerunner has announced Him, the nation has been roused. He Himself has been attesting His Messiahship by His life and teaching, until the forerunner in prison, apparently helpless and forgotten by the Messiah, is about to die, and the official rejection has commenced in xii:14, by the first meeting of the Sanhedrim to *plot His death*. From this point, the proclamation of the kingdom ceases, as it had been hitherto announced, and another phase of the Lord's ministry is entered upon.

This will explain the introduction of entirely new material into the third of the great discourses, and the adoption of the parabolic form of teaching, as being better adapted to His purposes.

3. THE NEW KINGDOM. Chapter xiii.

With the crowds gathered around Him, the Lord commenced the teaching of the disciples with a series of parables, dealing with what we may term a New Kingdom, namely a kingdom in *Mystery* in contrast to one in *Manifestation*. This latter is impossible, because of the attitude of the nation towards Him personally. The abounding sin will only make grace to much more abound, but this will be hidden from

the eyes of those who have been blinded to the true facts concerning the Messiah. In a later part of the Gospel, will be found the parable of the unfaithful husbandmen, chapter xxi. 33-44. In it, the Lord says, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Here He plainly describes the removal of the nation from the position designed for them of proclaiming the truth to the world, and that this position will be given to another. It is the transference of the kingdom from its *manifestation phase* to its *mystery phase*. He must wait for the nation to receive and acknowledge Him before He can give them the kingdom in full manifestation. In the meantime, He will carry on, through others, another kind of kingdom, the working of which will, in large measure, be hidden, secret and mysterious, accomplished by the unseen power which we now know to be that of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. The parables contained in chapter xiii. and other subsequent chapters will deal with this phase of His purpose. They will be known by the phrase with which they begin: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto ——." It will be seen, by careful study, that these parables cover the interval between the two advents, describing the progress of the work of God in the world under the altered conditions, namely, an

absent King establishing the kingdom of God in individual human hearts, rather than the visible kingdom in a country or a nation. All will be found to be in preparation for, and anticipation of, the fact stated in xxv. 31, namely, the sudden arrival of the King in His glory, and with all the holy angels, to sit on the throne of His (earthly) glory, for before Him will be gathered all the nations.

It may be helpful here to examine the use and meaning of certain phrases which are very similar in construction, but which must be understood in their shades of meaning. We shall find the following:

The kingdom of Heaven.

The kingdom of God.

The kingdom of Christ.

The kingdom of the Father.

Are these synonymous? There will be much difference of opinion as to this. The following thoughts are thrown out as suggestions, not as dogmatic assertions.

The phrase *the kingdom of heaven* is used only in this Gospel, occurring thirty-two times. The corresponding phrase, *kingdom of God*, on the other hand, occurs only five times (four times in the R. V.), but is frequently used in the other Gospels, and

in the Epistles. In comparing some of the parallel passages, such as Matt. xix. 14, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," and Luke xviii. 16, "of such is the kingdom of God," the terms must be taken to mean the same thing. But it seems difficult to assume that they are therefore interchangeable.

In Rom. xiv. 17, the Apostle Paul thus defines: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost." This definition may be applied to any text where the phrase "kingdom of God" is used, and it will be found to make perfect sense. Not so, however, if applied to the phrase "kingdom of heaven." How, then, shall we differentiate? In again studying the narrative of St. Matthew, we notice that, between chapters iii. and xii., the "kingdom of heaven" refers to that which John the Baptist, and the Lord Jesus announced as about to be offered to the nation of Israel, in fulfilment of their Scriptures, namely, the establishment on earth, in their own land, of the kingdom of God through their Messiah visibly ruling, and through the nation controlling and governing the whole world, by principles and laws revealed from heaven, and given by the One from heaven. It would, therefore, combine the spiritual and the material phases of kingdom. After the crisis of the twelfth chapter, and the im-

possibility of this being accomplished, the phrase, "kingdom of heaven," assumes, it is suggested, a different meaning, and is "THAT WHICH *professes TO BE UNDER THE RULE OF AN ABSENT KING.*" It will, therefore, contain mixture of what is real and what is false, which can only be detected by the eyes of the King Himself, which are "as a flame of fire."

Note, in the next place, the five occurrences of the phrase, "kingdom of God," in the Gospel, and how the Pauline definitions will fit into the context.

(1.) *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you.* vi. 33. This is a spiritual fact, without question.

(2.) *If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come nigh unto you.* xii. 28. Anyone who was the subject of such a mighty miracle would become possessed of Righteousness, which is Justification, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

(3.) *How hardly shall a rich man enter the kingdom of God.* xix. 24. Plenty of them are in the kingdom of heaven; they are welcomed into the professing Church of Christ because of the position their wealth gives them; but have they Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost? It is difficult for a rich man, if a philanthropist, to real-

ize his need of justification. His wealth gives him so much to enjoy, it is almost impossible for him to know his need of the peace of God passing all understanding, or the joy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

(4.) *The publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of God before you!* xxi. 23. It was easier to get these to confess their sin and receive Divine righteousness, peace and joy, than for the self-righteous Pharisees. As instances, there are Zaccheus, the Woman of Samaria, the sinful woman in Simon's house, as well as Matthew himself.

(5.) *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* xxi. 43. Have not the English-speaking nations been most used of God in proclaiming the doctrines of justification by faith, peace through the sacrifice of Christ, joy in the conscious presence of the Spirit of God and the fruits thereof?

If this be a fair and truthful meaning of the two phrases, may we not make a survey of the whole of the Bible thus? All through human history, there have been the two classes, the True and the merely Professing. The period from Adam to Saul may be called, for convenience sake, the "kingdom of Jehovah." In this are found such men as Cain and Abel; Ishmael and Isaac; Esau and Jacob;

Achan and Joshua, etc. The true ones form the kingdom of God of the period, for they' knew, but dimly perhaps, God's way of justifying, and God's way of peace.

Then the period from David to Malachi may be termed the "kingdom of Israel," with its mixture of the true and false. There are the faithful and unfaithful kings alternating, such as Solomon and Rehoboam; Jehoshaphat and Jehoram; Hezekiah and Manasseh. The Prophets also were of the two classes, Elijah and the Prophets of Baal; Jeremiah and Hananiah, etc.

The third period will be from the First to the Second Advent of our Lord, and is called the "kingdom of heaven" period. Taking the language of the parables, we find there will be wheat and tares; good and bad fish; faithful and unfaithful servants; virgins with and without oil, etc. Into the kingdom of God are gathered the first of each of these couples, though all profess to be in the kingdom of heaven.

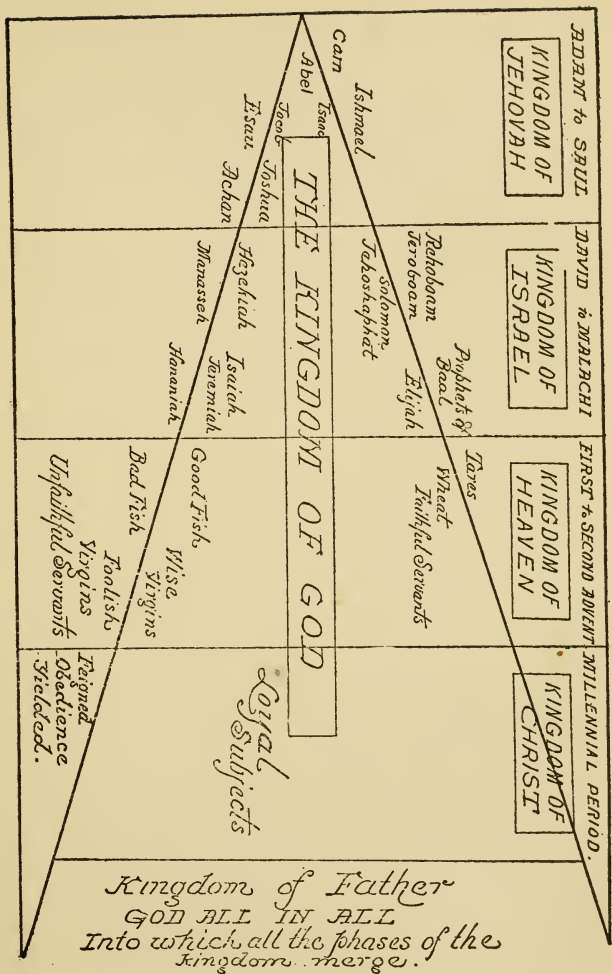
The fourth is the millennial kingdom, which is called the "kingdom of Christ." During this period, there will be the same phase of mixture; many will yield but feigned obedience, and a smouldering rebellion will break out at the first opportunity. The "kingdom of God" will have assumed its largest

dimensions in this period, but it will not be universal. Once more must separation take place, when the King must sever the false from the true.

After that period, there will come the "kingdom of the Father," when Christ will have handed up the kingdom to God even the Father, and God shall be all in all. This is the great climax for which the Lord taught the disciples to pray in the petition, "Our Father, who art in heaven,—THY KINGDOM COME."

Now to turn back to Matthew xiii., and look briefly at the new statements from the rejected King's lips about this new "kingdom of heaven." He describes Himself under various names. In the first parable, He is Sower; in the second, a Man owning a field; in the third, a Man sowing a mustard seed; in the fifth, a Man buying a field; in the sixth, a Man buying pearls. The whole suggestion is that of a mysterious, veiled person working, unobserved, behind the scenes, unrecognized by the majority, but effectually working out his own purposes. The good seed he sows is the Gospel of the grace of God but it is counterfeited by the spurious gospel of the enemy.

The outlook will be anything but bright; three-fourths of the sowing may be unproductive; the field may yield a larger crop of worthless weed than



wheat; the expense of acquiring what His heart is set on, may be very great, involving Him in the selling of all that He has, yet He *will* have that field with its treasure, and He *will* have that pearl of great price.

The work goes forward, but not as the disciples had expected, and the King, no longer declared to be such, is veiled, for a time, and is developing a hidden kingdom, a spiritual one, till the day of manifestation.

The keyword of this chapter is MIXTURE, and the *new* word is MYSTERY.

4. THE NEW ASSOCIATION. xvi. 13-28; xviii. 1-35.

Chapters xiv., xv., xvi., have revealed the sudden cruel martyrdom of John the Baptist, the increasing hostility of the Pharisees, and the withdrawal of the Lord to the most remote boundary of His journeyings, namely, the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi. Here He gives a further revelation of the future plans, and brings in His new word, CHURCH (xvi. 18). He again refers to it in xviii. 17. Put together the passages in xvi. 13-28 and xviii. 1-35, and they will make the fourth important discourse given to the disciples. It is a continuation of certain facts and principles of the kingdom of heaven, and He deals with His own sufferings and future return

in glory, with the causing of Stumbling, Discipline and Forgiveness. At the commencement of this proclamation, He has used those words in xvi. 18, 19, which have given rise to so much controversy, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," etc. Confusion has arisen through the imagining that the words "Church" and "kingdom" mean the same thing. They are to be kept quite distinct. There are no keys to the Church. The Holy Spirit is the Porter who has charge of the door of entrance, and He alone can admit to the Church. No man, or body of men, no hierarchy, or committee can admit to the Church of God. They have keys of doors to admit to that which, on earth, is visible, and is called "the kingdom of heaven," or by men, "the Church," but it is not ratified in heaven, necessarily. The *foundation* of the Church is the *Atonement*, the work wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

The keys handed to Peter were the *keys of knowledge* wherewith he subsequently went, after Pentecost, and opened, to Jews and Gentiles the doors into the knowledge of who, and where, Jesus the Nazarene was, namely, on the right hand of God in glory, and not, as was thought, in the tomb in the

garden of Joseph of Arimathea. Peter proclaimed the sovereignty of the King, the power of the King to save from sin because He had been crucified. He used one key on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem, and 3,000 Jews entered the kingdom of heaven, and confessed Jesus as the Christ. He used the other key at Cæsarea, in the household of Cornelius, and all that household also entered the kingdom of heaven. To his surprise, and to the surprise of others, there was found to be no "wall of partition" inside the doors.

The concluding statement was that the *veiled unseen Lord* would nevertheless be *present with His people*, even when only two happened to meet together in His name, whether on the street, or in prayer, or in worship, or in any other way. If His name be the bond of union, the subject of conversation, the object of faith, THERE AM I. This would lift the gloom and the difficulty with regard to the grave "kingdom" question, and they must work, worship, and wait for Him under these new and unexpected conditions.

The keyword of this proclamation is PRESENCE, and the new word is CHURCH.

5. THE NEW HOPE. xxiii.-xxv.

It is the last week of the earthly ministry and of the loving care of those few faithful men and

women. He has returned to Jerusalem, and is giving His last public utterances in the temple courts, and the final explanations to the disciples. Chapter xxiii. is the last utterance in the temple, and it is nothing but WOE pronounced on those leaders who have opposed Him from the beginning, and are guilty of preventing others, who would have done so, from entering into the kingdom of heaven. The woe must fall, there can be no escape. The close of the chapter tells how He left the sacred building, calling it "*Your house,*" not, as He had at the beginning of His ministry, "*My Father's house.*" The rejected Son of the Father is leaving the house of the Father, and from henceforth it will be disowned, unprotected, unvisited. As He leaves, He hints at His return, but only as the welcomed Son of David and the Messiah from heaven. On the way to the Mount of Olives, the disciples, pained at His remarks about the building they all loved so intensely, tried to rekindle His waning interest in it by calling His attention to its superb foundation stones, so clearly visible.

This led to His memorable utterances to them on the mountain, contained in xxiv. and xxv. First, He drew a darker picture than He had yet drawn before them, describing the future convulsions, both national and physical, which would overwhelm the

nation and city, culminating in the utter destruction both of city and temple, so that the most glorious house would be obliterated. It was a time of profound peace. The Lord was born when the Roman power held absolute sway, and there was not a ripple on the surface. But no sooner had the Jewish sin against God culminated in the crucifixion of the Son of God, and the rejection of the Holy Spirit, than war broke out which has never ceased, and continues in the world up to the present time. It will so continue till the Prince of Peace returns to make wars to cease, and to do so by putting back into their right place the nation whom God long since chose to be HIS central power for the government of the world in righteousness and peace. No Peace Societies can ever accomplish what God has put into the hands of His Son to accomplish.

The disciples asked Him three questions: When shall these things be? meaning the overthrow He had just described; What shall be the sign of Thy coming? which He had referred to in xxiii. 39, and What shall be the sign of the end of the age? He had referred to the end of the age in chapter xiii., in the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares. These three questions He answers in the order in which they were asked. The first is answered in verses 4-8.

“All these things are the beginning of travail.”

The second question is answered in verses 9 to the middle of 30, “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” What that sign will be, there seems to be no indication. It will be a sign recognized by the remnant of the Jewish nation undergoing the last terrible siege of their city by the combined armies of anti-Christ. This sign will be to them the precursor of their great deliverance, to be shortly followed by the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. The third answer is from the middle of verse 30, and 31.

All the features described in the earlier verses have been prevalent throughout the world during the last nineteen centuries. The recurrence of earthquakes, famines, and other great calamities, is *not* a sign of the end. It is the predicted order of things until God shall restore all things at the Second Advent, and then these calamities will cease.

The last section of this chapter is the Lord's comment on His predictions, giving practical shape to them in the exhortations He delivers. They are primarily meant for the guidance and comfort of such of His own nation as will be passing through the crisis period of the close of the dark part of the national history, and this chapter does not con-

tain the revelation of these events in relation to the Church.

Ch. xxv. concludes the discourse. The first parable commences with the word THEN, fixing the time of fulfilment in relation to the preceding chapter. It concludes with the same injunction as in xxiv. 42, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." The second parable is a private scene of reward to faithful servants during the closing darkest period. And the third is not parable at all, but the prediction of facts, namely, the appearing in glory of the Son of man, sitting upon the throne of His glory, the EARTHLY throne, it must be remembered, and before Him being gathered all nations, mainly European nations, concerned in the recent events of the attack and defence of Jerusalem. The scene is one dealing with the preliminary stages of the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, so long delayed, and is the amplification of the words in xiii. 41, "the gathering out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity." If we are right in suggesting that the whole of the circumstances centre round the Jewish nation, then "My brethren" will refer to the members of that nation, and not to the members of the Church. The principle, however, holds good of the rewards to be given to all who have succoured the Lord's

own people under any circumstances, but the *interpretation* of this scene must be localized to the people specially referred to, and for whose guidance and enlightenment this Gospel was primarily written.

Thus the King will return, take possession of the kingdom by force, seeing He was rejected when coming on the ground of grace. It is not the termination of the history of the world, but the termination of another stage in its history merely, the stage that commenced with Christ's first coming to redeem and bless, and concludes with His return to govern and rule in righteousness.

The keyword of this last proclamation is MANIFESTATION. The new words are WOE, ELECT, JUDGMENT. Not the whole nation are to be partakers of final blessing, but a selection out of them who shall be found to be believers. Not universal mercy, but judgment, must mark the arrival of the Lord, inasmuch as His fulfilment of law in the Atonement will have been refused all down the centuries, and the great apostacy will have culminated in the development of anti-Christ, which will have vitally affected a large section of the nation, who will have received this evil and false Messiah, in preference to the true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. The opening question, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" will have its full and final answer in

His appearing in glory to occupy the throne of David, and in His enemies being made His footstool.

WHEN THE KING COMES.

They come and go, the seasons fair,
 And bring their spoil to vale and hills;
 But oh! there is waiting in the air,
 And a passionate hope the spirit fills.
 Why doth He tarry, the absent Lord?
 When shall the kingdom be restored,
 And earth and heaven, with one accord,
 Ring out the cry that the King comes?

CHORUS.—What will it be when the King comes!

The floods have lifted up their voice—
 The King hath come to His own, His own!
 The little hills and vales rejoice,
 His right it is to take the crown.
 Sleepers, awake, and meet Him first!
 Now let the marriage hymn outburst,
 And powers of darkness flee, disperst:
 What will it be when the King comes!

A ransomed earth breaks forth in song,
 Her sin-stained ages overpast;
 Her yearning, "Lord, how long, how long?"
 Exchanged for joy at last, at last!
 Angels carry the royal commands;
 Peace beams forth throughout all the lands;
 The trees of the field shall clap their hands:
 What will it be when the King comes!

Now Zion's hill, with glory crowned,
 Uplifts her head with joy once more;
 And Zion's King, once scorned, disowned,
 Extends her rule from shore to shore.
 Sing, for the land her Lord regains!
 Sing, for the Son of David reigns!
 And living streams o'erflow her plains:
 What will it be when the King comes!

St. Matthew: The King's Proclamations. 65

Oh, brothers, stand as men that wait—
The dawn is purpling in the east,
And banners wave from heaven's high gate;
The conflict now—but soon the feast!
Mercy and truth shall meet again;
Worthy the Lamb that once was slain!
We can suffer now—He will know us then:
What will it be when the King comes!

E. E. ELLIOTT.

THE FIVE PROCLAMATIONS OF THE KING TO HIS SUBJECTS

<p>CHAPTERS V, VI, VII.</p>	<p>CHAPTER X.</p>	<p>CHAPTER XIII.</p>	<p>CHAPTERS XVI. 13-28; XVIII. 1-35.</p>	<p>CHAPTERS XVIII, XXIV, XXV.</p>
<p>DIVISIONS. 1. v. 3-16. Introductory. 2. v. 17-vii. 12. Law and Prophets. [a] v. 17-48. Relation of Man to Man. [b] VI. 1-18. Relation of Man to God in Things Spiritual. [c] VI. 19-32. Relation of Man to God in Things Temporal. [d] VII. 1-12. Attitude of Man toward God and Man. 3. vii. 13-29. Be decided.</p>	<p>DIVISIONS. 1. vs. 5-15. Local. 2. 16-23. After Pentecost. 3. 24-62. General Principles.</p>	<p>DIVISIONS. 1. vs. 1-23. The Sower. 2. 24-30. Wheat and Tares. 3. 31, 32. Mustard Seed. 4. 33. Leaven. 5. 44. Treasure in Field. 6. 45. Pearl. 7. 47-50. Drag-net.</p>	<p>DIVISIONS. 1. xvi. 13-28. The King's Sufferings and Triumph. 2. xviii. 1-14. Little Ones. 3. xviii. 15-20. Discipline. 4. xviii. 21-35. Forgiveness.</p>	<p>DIVISIONS. 1. xviii. Woes. 2. xxiv. 3-6. Answer to 1st Question. 3. xxiv. 7-30½. Answer to 2nd Question. 4. xxiv. 30½-31. Answer to 3d Question. 5. xxv. 1-13. Ten Virgins. 6. xxv. 14-30. Talents. 7. xxv. 31-46. Sheep and Goats.</p>
<p>The New LAW.</p>	<p>The New MISSION.</p>	<p>The New KINGDOM.</p>	<p>The New ASSOCIATION.</p>	<p>The New HOPE.</p>
<p>The King A LAWGIVER.</p>	<p>The King A SAVIOUR.</p>	<p>The King VEILED.</p>	<p>The King PRESENT THOUGH VEILED.</p>	<p>The King A JUDGE.</p>
<p>NEW WORDS Blessed. Father. Heaven.</p>	<p>NEW WORDS Freely. Persecution. Confess.</p>	<p>NEW WORD Mystery.</p>	<p>NEW WORD Church.</p>	<p>NEW WORDS Woe. Elect. Judgment.</p>
<p>KEYWORD RIGHTEOUSNESS.</p>	<p>KEYWORD VARIANCE.</p>	<p>KEYWORD MIXTURE.</p>	<p>KEYWORD PRESENCE.</p>	<p>KEYWORD MANIFESTATION.</p>

CHAPTER IV.

ST. MATTHEW: THE KING.

THE PARABLES—PHOTOGRAPHIC AND PROPHEIC.

THIS Gospel contains twenty prominent Parables, of which thirteen are found only in it. Of these twenty, fourteen form the “kingdom of heaven” series.

The thirteen peculiar to the book are:

1. The Wheat and Tares.
2. The Hidden Treasure.
3. The Pearl of Great Price.
4. The Dragnet.
5. The Householder and His Treasure.
6. The Unforgiving Servant.
7. Vineyard Labourers.
8. The Wedding Feast.
9. The Ten Virgins.
10. The Talents.
11. The Sheep and Goats.
12. The Builders on Rock and Sand.
13. The Man with two Sons.

The “kingdom of heaven” series comprises numbers one to eleven, together with the parables of the

Sower, the Mustard Seed and the Leaven. The remaining parables, found also in other Gospels, are the Lost Sheep, the Unfaithful Vineyard Husbandmen, the Patched Cloth, and the Wineskins.

The Lord's parables have sometimes been compared to the great works of fiction produced by well-known authors, as though such might be classified with these wondrous utterances of His. The difference between them lies in this, that whilst all works of fiction and parables may be photographic, and depict different phases of human life and character as they actually exist, works of fiction by human writers can *never be prophetic*. If any should be, it is accidental, and not the result of foreknowledge. Not so with the Lord's parables. They must ever stand out as being divine in their conception, and whilst photographic of human character in all time, and not merely when they were uttered, they are also prophetic, and as such, as accurate as in their other features. With the Lord, there was no speculation as to the future. He spoke from *knowledge*, not from mere guess of what perchance might be. It is, therefore, highly derogatory ever to compare these sublime and far-reaching utterances with the highest flights of intellectual fancy.

Another important feature that must not be over-

looked, is, that in the Lord's parables nothing of fable, or contrary to nature is ever introduced. He *invents* nothing in order to illustrate the truth. All He weaves into parable is everyday matter-of-fact, things that happened constantly, and that might happen anywhere. This made all He said so striking, so forcible. His word told so effectually, because divine truths were illustrated by ordinary happenings. Much of human parable is absolutely impossible and fictitious—clever as it may appear to be.

HOW DOES THE KING APPEAR?

Having been officially rejected by the Sanhedrim, and knowing what the climax of this must be, the Lord began to teach in parables, not to *conceal* the truth, but to so partially veil it, that only those who came to inquire of Him the meaning, would be able to understand. The method He adopted was, therefore, to *stir inquiry*, not to stifle knowledge. In this way must the quotation from Isa. vi. in Matt. xiii. 14, be understood: "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed: lest, haply, they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their

heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them." To the disciples, He at once proceeded to explain, and nothing gave Him greater joy than to be enquired of. Is not this the secret today of all blessing? To the multitudes now, the Lord's words are as hidden as in His own time.

In the series of parables selected for our study we shall see how He veils Himself, but shews what He is doing whilst rejected and invisible. In xiii. 3, He appears as a Sower of seed. No one will look twice at such a familiar and ordinary man. In xiii. 24, He represents Himself as a Man owning a field, and He afterwards explains that the field is the world. This one explanation is the clue to the subsequent use of the word "world" in other parables. He has stepped outside the narrow circle of the Jewish nation and polity, and is beginning to expand His mission, and shew that it is for the world. This was one new idea for these disciples. In xiii. 31, He is a Man sowing a tiny seed, a mustard seed, which develops abnormally, and becomes a great tree. Then, in xiii. 44, He is a Man who, finding a treasure, hides it, and buys the field wherein it is hidden, and sells all he has in order to be able to get possession. In the next parable, He is the Merchantman (ver. 45), selling all to buy the pearl of great price. To preserve the continuity of the

teaching, it will be found necessary to make Him the prominent figure in all these cases. It is about Himself He is teaching as still the King, but the rejected King. But what is the treasure, and what is the pearl?

It is a principle, in the interpretation of Scripture, that words are used in the same connection throughout, unless otherwise specified. We must therefore look to find out in what connection these two words are elsewhere used. The word Treasure is a favourite word descriptive of the peculiar value God has set upon the nation of Israel (see Exodus xix. 5, Psalm cxxxv. 4, and Malachi iii. 17). Here, then, is our clue. The Lord is evidently referring to the fact that He came to obtain possession of the lost nation, and to hide it in the world which He would redeem, till such time as He would produce it before all eyes. Is not this the exact condition of the nation now, and will it not be so till He returns and discloses it as His peculiar treasure? Then for the Pearl we must turn to Rev. xxi. 21, where the gates of the new Jerusalem are spoken of as of pearl. And in a previous verse, this city is called the bride, the Lamb's wife. This seems to be an allusion to the Church as the Bride, and therefore the parable will contain, embedded in it, the truth that the same price paid for the world has also been

paid for the Church. It is spoken of as "*purchased with His own blood.*"

While the first three parables give the general aspect of His work—proclaiming, and scattering, the good seed of the Gospel, the two last referred to give the inner fact of the purchase of Calvary, the rich One becoming poor in order to acquire the rights of property in the whole world and all it contains, namely, a people that belong to Him, and a Church to belong to Him for His special adornment and glory.

In xiii. 51, He speaks of Himself as a Householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. In what He has already said have been seen old things, such as the Word of God being like seeds; an enemy being at work; the angels; the treasure; a big tree growing. But the new things He brought forth were startling in their meaning and far beyond the expectation and conception of the Jewish mind. The prophetic element has entered in with the phrase, "at the end of the age," and all the events clustering around it.

In chap. xxi. 1, the King appears as a Householder employing labour in his vineyard. If the day may represent the period of His absence, it shews how, during all the time of His absence, He is willing and anxious to secure workers, whom He will reward as He thinks fit.

In chap. xviii. 23, He is represented, for the first time, as a King; but it is a private scene, and not a public one. He is seen taking account of His servants, and finding out the terrible defalcations of one of them. The series of parables is drawing near its close, and as this is the case, the original features in which the King was represented begin to disappear, and what He really is comes into sight instead.

In chap. xxii. 2, He gives the parable of the marriage of the king's son. It is easy to see who is meant. He Himself is the son, but attention is immediately diverted from the central group, to be fixed on one of the guests, and nothing further is told concerning the marriage, or the parties immediately concerned.

Similarly, the next parable (chap. xxv. 4) opens with "*Behold the Bridegroom cometh!*" but no further description is given, nor, in either case, is any mention made of the Bride. Why not? To the Jewish mind, anything resembling the idea of marriage in connection with their Messiah was absolutely foreign to their thoughts. It would not have been politic or prudent to have then disclosed what was a mystery hidden from all prophets, and not revealed to any, namely, the mystery of the Church as the Bride of the Lamb. It is merely hinted at in

the briefest manner, and attention drawn to other details which would be of more importance to those for whom these words were uttered.

In chap. xxv. 13, He is seen as a Nobleman administering his estate and property, and this, again is a private scene, and not for the general public. Then, in verse 31, suddenly, without warning, or any intimation, the King takes His place on His throne, and wields the sceptre of sovereign power, which is irresistible. All nations are summoned; none can or dare keep away. Around Him are the executive hosts of mighty angels, who do His will, who excel in strength, before whom the strongest human hosts are as nothing. They have watched the infinite patience and long suffering of their Lord, with human sin and rebellion, and now that the hour has struck for the putting forth of His mighty power, they are there, keen, eager, dependable, and accurate; and the work of solemn separation, so often foretold, proceeds. The unknown, unrecognized, ordinary Sower has been manifested as the Lord of the World, wherein He sowed the seed of the truth, which He watered with His own blood.

The photographic features of the parables can be easily distinguished. In the parable of the Sower, He portrayed the different conditions of His hearers towards the truth. In the Wheat and Tares, He

shewed the present activity of the enemy in counteracting by the sowing of error. In the Vineyard Labourers, He illustrated the motives for religious work—some entering in for the sake of the bargain made; others in simple trust. At the same time, these features are true in every period of the history of the progress of the Lord's kingdom. They are prophetic of how men will always act.

FEATURES OF PARTIAL FAILURE AND MIXTURE.

Amongst many, probably the majority, is the idea that the world is being gradually brought to Christ's feet by the process of the preaching of the Gospel, and that the only kingdom spoken of is a spiritual kingdom, which will affect the general well-being and alter the condition of things gradually, until the era of the millennium, or the golden age, shall be reached. If the idea be correct, is there anything in the Lord's parables to prove or warrant it? Surely He will give some hints of such a process, if it be His method of establishing His kingdom. Let us examine some of these parables again, to observe what He does say. He indicates first partial failure, and not universal success. In the first parable of the Sower, He shews that the seed fails from three causes, namely, no soil, no root, no room; and that only a small portion yields

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a crop, though that crop is a large one in proportion to the amount sown. In the second, that of the Wheat and Tares, a large portion of the field is occupied with what the enemy sowed, and therefore, by so much, the yield is injuriously affected. The active opposition of Satan is as great a factor in non-success as the normal condition of human hearts. In the Mustard Seed is suggested abnormal growth, so that the herb which had as its original function that of bearing seed, fails to do so, and becomes a tree which cannot bear any fruit. It suggests, therefore the abnormal development of a system of so-called Christianity from what Christ originally sowed, which has failed, and is failing, altogether, in its original purpose; so that instead of the world being fully evangelized and enlightened, more than two-thirds of its population in our own time have never heard the sound of the Gospel, and CANNOT HEAR IT; simply because the professing Church of God fails to understand its responsibilities. Then in the parable of the Leaven, the presence of the leaven converts the meal into another substance. The three measures may suggest to us the doctrine of the Trinity, which is everywhere leavened with the threefold error of—first, the universal Fatherhood of God; second, the non-atoning death of Christ and the doubt of His Deity;

third, the denial of the Personality of the Holy Spirit. No section of the Church now can be found to maintain the purity of doctrine; only individuals here and there are doing so.

In the parable of the Unforgiving Servant is portrayed the failure in spirit and inner motive, and is a picture of the business practice of Christendom of today. Two men both profess to be Christians, and attend the same place of worship. Both acknowledge the same Lord; both pray, "*Have mercy on us—miserable sinners.*" But on the Monday, if the one finds that the other is owing him money, he puts the law rigorously in force to obtain payment, although the debtor pleads that mercy be shewn him, even as the creditor has himself prayed for, and obtained, mercy of Another greater than either of them. Christian principle finds no place for its exercise in the business and commerce of so-called Christian men.

Again, in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, there is found failure to perceive the Employer's sovereignty in the matter of payment as He chooses. Here may there not be a picture of the religious practice of Christendom? So many will practise religion for the immediate benefit it gives in social position and respectability. They have their reward. But another section practice

their religion from another motive, namely, faith in the Person who has employed them. Such get the same outward reward, but more. To the first set is said, "*Go thy way,*" implying, I have no further need of your services. Not so with those who went to work on faith. They will be wanted for higher service elsewhere. In the parable of the Ten Virgins is taught failure in watchfulness and in possession of the oil; and in the parable of the Talents, failure in diligence. In short, in no case is there a picture of success and victory.

The element of MIXTURE, too, is equally important. Tares are mixed with wheat; leaven with meal; good and bad fish have to be separated; there are contented and discontented servants working together; there are guests with and without the necessary wedding garments, sitting side by side; there are sleeping virgins with and without oil, all together, and not till the crisis of the Master's appearance takes place does separation ensue. In fact, He Himself said, concerning the tares and wheat, "*Let both grow together till the harvest, and then I will say to the reapers, Gather the tares together to burn them, but gather the wheat into My barn.*"

He did not foretell the world converted or subdued by the process of evangelizing, but He did foretell that, besides the real results of evangelizing,

there would be the production of the imitation of the true, and the impossibility of any severance till authorized by Himself. Every effort has failed to purify the Church; and the condition of affairs, throughout the world, with the rapid increase of the heathen populations, should make men pause and think ere they give utterance to positive statements as to the conversion of the world to Christ. True, materially, things are improving rapidly: sanitary science, medical science, labour-saving machinery, improved means of communication, the interchange of ideas by all the nations—all these things are causing rapid, momentous and beneficial changes to take place; but this is not the spreading of the kingdom of God. It is the march of civilization, permitted, no doubt, by Divine wisdom and grace, but, all the while, the King is absent, and ignored by many, whilst the vaster multitudes are ignorant of His existence, to say nothing of their ignorance of His redeeming love. Looking all down the centuries, we can clearly see how prophetic were these utterances, and how profoundly important they are for the careful student of the Word of God, that he may know the times in which he is living.

The nominal Christian will be found to be represented in the following ways:

80 *The Parables—Photographic and Prophetic.*

1. As a rocky ground hearer, and as a thorny ground hearer.

2. As tares imitating the outward appearance, but producing no fruit.

3. As bad fish, to be thrown away.

4. As the unforgiving servant, and harsh towards his fellow-servants.

5. As the grumbling day-labourer, resenting the treatment meted out to his supposed inferiors.

6. As the self-righteous man, without the wedding garment, needing no provision of God to prepare him for admission into His presence.

7. As sleeping ones unprovided with the necessary oil; indifferent to the surrounding circumstances, and not possessing the Holy Spirit.

8. As possessing a talent given by the Lord, but buried in the world, and never recognized as his Lord's at all, and therefore denying practically all responsibility.

9. As the goats, in antagonism, and found at last on the left hand, to be sentenced to doom.

The true Christian can be depicted by taking up the characters on the other side in the parables.

One other fact of importance must be noticed in conclusion. There are the two parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven, which are given by St.

Matthew and St. Luke. The former introduces them as "*kingdom of heaven*" parables, the latter as "*kingdom of God*" parables. This produces a certain amount of difficulty in their interpretation, if we pursue the principles of interpretation laid down.

Much controversy has arisen as to the meaning of Leaven, which most assert is never used of anything but what is evil. Others, on the other hand, say that in these parables there is the one exception, and that it here represents the silent, secret permeation of the world with the Gospel. In the first place, meal is never used as typical of the world. Then, again, the significance of a woman being the one to introduce it must not be overlooked. She is generally typical of either the true or the professing Church. The solution to the difficulty may lie in this direction, that the parables, being given evidently on two different occasions, and under different circumstances, are capable of *two distinct interpretations*.

In the first case, they form part of a series in which the Lord is revealing the history of the professing Church on earth, and therefore in St. Matthew's Gospel it seems right to make the mustard seed represent abnormal growth never intended, and the leaven the symbol of the working of error in doctrine.

82 *The Parables—Photographic and Prophetic.*

In St. Luke's Gospel, however, we may draw quite another set of ideas from them. The occasion of their delivery, then, was after the healing of the woman in the synagogue, afflicted with spinal trouble for eighteen years, and suddenly cured (chap. xiii.) The greatest fault was found with the Lord by the ruler of the synagogue, and he requested that people would not come on the Sabbath-day to be healed. Then the Lord, in reply and explanation, pointed out that what had taken place was the working of the kingdom of God. Bearing in mind the definition already made, namely, that the kingdom of God is "*Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost,*" He points out that what has taken place in this poor woman has been, first, a remarkable and unexpected growth of life and power, like that of the mustard seed, and that also she has been quickly and quietly infused with a secret life and blessing in spirit, soul and body, as leaven permeates three measures of meal. She has received that touch of His justifying power, and been delivered from the power of Satan. Peace with God has taken the place of gloom and depression, while she has been so filled with joy that she has glorified God.

It seems that we may let both applications of the parables stand, for both are true; only the leaven

does not refer to the Gospel, but to the power of the truth, as spoken by the Lord, dominating a human being, and transforming her throughout.

The great missionary parable is that of Matt. xxii., where the servants are sent out into the high-ways and byways to compel all whom they can to come in. We are living in that ninth verse, and must see to it that we so understand our Lord's teachings as to be obedient and active where He has commanded.

Footnote.—It is not the purpose in this book to enter into a detailed exposition of the Parables of this Gospel. Those who desire something more exhaustive, would do well to consult a new book lately published, entitled, "The Study of the Parables," by Ada Habershon, and to be obtained from C. C. Cook, 150 Nassau Street, New York. Price, \$1.50.

CHAPTER V.

ST. MARK: THE SERVANT.

HIS CHARACTER, CONDUCT, AND THE TREATMENT HE RECEIVED.

“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth.”—Isa. xlii. 1.

THE AUTHOR.

THE writer of this Gospel had two names—John, his Jewish name, and Mark (or Marcus), his Latin name. He was the son of a Jewish matron named Mary, who lived in Jerusalem. His cousin was Barnabas, who lived in the island of Cyprus. The apostle Peter had been the means of his conversion to the faith of Christ, for he calls him “Marcus my son” in 1 Pet. v. 13. It was in his mother’s house that the all-night prayer-meeting was being held for his beloved friend Peter when lying in prison under sentence of death (Acts xii). It was, therefore, perfectly natural that the apostle should make his way there immediately upon his deliverance from prison.

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their

departure to Antioch (Acts xii. 25). He went with them on their first missionary journey to the heathen (xiii. 5); but left them at Perga (xiii. 3), probably finding it impossible to keep pace with that tireless and indomitable man Paul. Later, when Barnabas wanted again to take his cousin on their second journey, Paul would not hear of it (Acts xv. 8). This so annoyed Barnabas, that he took him off to Cyprus, leaving Paul to choose some other companion, namely, Silas. But Mark recovered his lost position as a Foreign Missionary, for in Col. iv. 10, 11, we find him back at Paul's side in Rome, and called his fellow-labourer, and also mentioned by Peter as having been with him in Babylon. Then he is mentioned once more in 2 Tim. iv. 11, when Paul asks Timothy to bring him along with him to Rome. He therefore fully recovered his original place in the love and esteem of the great apostle, and the record is given us, no doubt, to encourage and cheer those who, at the first attempt at difficult and trying work, fail.

His Gospel was probably written at Peter's dictation, and in Rome, and was chiefly designed to help the Roman Christians. There is great similarity in the opening of the Gospel with the opening words of Peter's address to Cornelius' household, in Acts x. Compare the two.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES.

There is a marked omission of all references to Jewish law. Words are explained that would not be understood by Roman readers, such as Boanerges, Talitha cumi, Bartimeus, Abba Father, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. The two mites are said to make a farthing, and Gehenna is explained as fire unquenchable.

Jewish customs are explained, such as washing hands before meals, time for Passover celebration, the preparation day being for the Sabbath.

The effect on the crowds, and on the disciples, of the Lord's words and actions is carefully noted; see such passages as i. 22-27, ii. 12; also vi. 57, x. 24. Many others should be looked up and noted.

The Lord's human personality is strongly marked, as in such words as—He sighed deeply (vii. 34), He loved him (x. 21), wondered at their unbelief (vi. 2), looked with anger being grieved (iii. 5), rebuked Peter (viii. 33), He was moved with indignation (x. 14), was hungry (xi. 12), rests (vi. 31), and others.

St. Mark is very circumstantial as to position, gestures, words, and describes persons. He narrates numbers, too, mentioning there were about two thousand swine, that the disciples were sent out two and two, that the crowds were made to sit down

by hundreds and by fifties. He records the time of day when events happened, such as: A great while before day, After some days, It being now eventide, It was the third hour. He is vivid, terse, clear, full of detail, full of emphasis, accurate. He portrays a man hard at work; doing what He says, practising His own preaching, praying much, sympathetic, unostentatious—very few words, but much work. He is the Model Servant.

RETIREMENT AFTER WORK.

No servant of any repute ever waits round to hear what remarks might be made about his work. His sole business is to please his master. Notice, then, the occasions of the Lord's retirement:

After the miracles of healing at the close of the Sabbath, He retired early in the morning for prayer. i. 35.

After healing the leper, He was without in desert places. i. 45.

He withdrew to the sea after the outburst of anger through the healing of the withered hand. iii. 7-12.

He went about the villages teaching. He found village work much more successful than town work, and preferred the quiet, unobtrusive work to the more public. vi. 6.

“Come apart and rest awhile.” He knew the need for retirement after the strain of much work. vi. 31, 32.

After another prolonged conflict, He arose and went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. vii. 24.

After healing the blind man, He went into the villages. vii. 27.

He withdrew to the Mount of Transfiguration. ix. 22.

He retired to Bethany after His Temple work. xi. 11.

Every evening of that last week of His earthly ministry, He withdrew to the quiet, and peace, and sympathy of the home of His three dear friends at Bethany. xi. 19.

The keyword is STRAIGHTWAY, which has two other English renderings, namely, *Forthwith* and *Immediately*. In the Revised Version, the word “Straightway” has been uniformly used, and will be found 40 times. Such frequent repetition is in order to impress the mind with the rapidity, accuracy, and value of such a servant, so unlike any ordinary earthly servant. Of the 40 occurrences, 9 are in connection with the corresponding activity of the enemy, and are as follows:

The demoniac crying out in the synagogue as soon as Jesus entered. Why? Because never be-

fore had any one filled with the Holy Spirit entered that building, and so there had been no one to antagonize. i. 23.

The conspiracy of the Pharisees followed immediately on the healing of the withered hand. iii. 6.

"Then cometh Satan," immediately the seed has fallen. By a little gossip and ordinary conversation, how quickly the seed sown in a sermon is disposed of, within twenty yards of the door of the place of worship! iv. 15.

The demoniacs met the Lord immediately He reached the other side. It was the invasion of the devil's peculiar territory, which was defended. v. 2.

The rapid carrying out of the cruel design for the death of John the Baptist. vi. 25-27.

The demon immediately tare the poor child he possessed, when he came into the presence of the Lord. ix. 20.

The Council was held without delay to try and condemn the Lord after the arrest by the band of Judas. xv. 1.

THE KEY VERSE is x. 45, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." It would be the fulfilling of the great prophecy of Isaiah xlii. 1-4 and 18.

The Introduction is characteristic, inasmuch as

the narrative commences with the words: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." At once, the writer introduces the forerunner, and in so doing, gets the great declaration of the character of the Servant of God in the forefront, namely, "*Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.*" This is the beginning of the Gospel for all readers. The Son of God has come: has come from God: has come to earth to serve: has come to save. If God is well pleased with Him, who dare be displeased? Yet the Gospel story ends with the displeasure of the people manifested in the shouts of Crucify Him! Crucify Him! and this in spite of the question, "Why? What evil hath He done?"

THE DIVISIONS AND CHAPTER TITLES.

The Divisions are five:

- (a) Preparation. Chap. i. 1-13.
- (b) Ministry in Eastern Galilee. i. 14-vii. 23.
- (c) Ministry in Northern Galilee. vii. 24-ix. 50.
- (d) Ministry in Judea and Perea. x. 1-31.
- (e) Closing scenes and Ascension. x. 32-xvi.

CHAPTER TITLES.

The chapters are so full of incident, and move so rapidly, that it is difficult to fix on chapter titles,

so as to carry out the idea of "The Servant." The following are suggested in place of any better, though it would be wiser for all readers to make their own titles, rather than adopt another's offhand:

- I. Servant introduced to work.
- II. Sick of the Palsy.
- III. Withered Hand.
- IV. Sowing and Groaning.
- V. Subduing Disease, Demons, Death.
- VI. Sent, Slain, Satisfied, Stilled.
- VII. "Ephphatha!"
- VIII. "As trees walking!"
- IX. Transfiguration.
- X. Entering the kingdom of God.
- XI. Entering Jerusalem.
- XII. Question and Answer.
- XIII. Prophecy.
- XIV. Gethsemane.
- XV. Despised and Rejected.
- XVI. Risen and Ascended.

THE MINISTRY OF THE HAND.

A SERVANT IS VALUED according to the skill in the work he has to do. There will be prominence given to the ministry of His hands, as seen in the following passages:

He took her by the hand, and the fever left her.

i. 31.

He put forth His hand and touched the leper. i. 41.

The prayer of Jairus was that He would come

and lay His hand upon his dying child, and she would recover. v. 33.

He took the damsel by the hand: doing exactly what He had been asked to do, with the result following that was anticipated. v. 41.

The deaf man was brought to Jesus, and his friends beseech Him to put His hands on him. They have made the discovery of the power in those hands. vii. 32.

He put His fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue. The Lord always loved to identify Himself with the actual cause of trouble and show how fully He understood the trouble and sympathized with the sufferer. vii. 33.

The blind man was brought also by his friends, who requested Jesus to touch him. The Lord took him by the hand first, to lead him away from his friends and have him alone. Then He put His hands upon him, a first and a second time, till his vision was clear. viii. 22-25.

The little, demon-possessed boy brought by his father was hurled to the ground by the demon, as Jesus commanded him to leave. Then, as the child lay unconscious upon the ground, Jesus, with infinite compassion, took him by the hand and lifted him up. ix. 27.

He took a child, and when He had taken him in

His arms, He made use of him as an object-lesson for the disciples. ix. 3-36.

He healed the withered hand, and enabled the man to work again. iii. 5.

One poor woman said, "If I may but touch the hem of His garment." The use of His hands towards the needy made some wish to use their hands towards Him. v. 28.

If they might but touch, if it were but the border of His garments. His outstretched hand and their outstretched hands! Thus does the hand of the Saviour meet the fevered, leprous, dead, shrunken hand of the sinner, and there is life and health immediately. vi. 56. "*Behold My Servant!*"

IT WILL BE NOTICED that there are only four parables in this Gospel, for a servant is not necessarily a teacher. Of these, one only is found peculiar to the Gospel—that of iv. 25-29. It is characteristic of the portrait of the Servant, for the Man who sows the seed does his work faithfully, and goes away, leaving all results to God, until the time of harvest shall come round. This is all any servant can do. This is what Jesus did. It also suggests the silent, secret watchfulness of God over the world, and over His Word in it. The other three are the parables of the Sower, Mustard Seed, and Unfaithful Husbandmen of the Vineyard.

HOW WAS HE TREATED? .

WILL NOT SUCH A SERVANT, with such wonderful powers of service, be welcomed and valued? Alas! no. Man's thoughts are not as God's thoughts. "They will reverence my son," said the father in the parable of the Vineyard, but they cast Him out and slew Him. See how St. Mark describes this:

They took counsel how they might destroy Him. iii. 6.

They began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts. v. 17.

They laughed Him to scorn. v. 40.

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? And they were offended in Him. vi. 3. His lowly estate hid from their eyes His true position as the One who had taken upon Him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man.

They began to question Him—or tempting Him, as the R. V. puts it, showing that the form of questioning was not inquiry, but opposition. viii. 11.

They sought how they might destroy Him. xi. 18.

Sought to lay hold of Him. xii. 12.

Sought how they might take Him by craft, and kill Him. xiv. 1.

Judas Iscariot went away unto the chief priests, that he might deliver Him unto them—sought how he might conveniently deliver Him. xiv. 10.

Judas came to Him and kissed Him. xiv. 45.

They laid hands on Him and took Him. xiv. 46.

The chief priests and the whole council sought witness against Jesus to put Him to death. xiv. 56.

Many bare false witness against Him. xiv. 56.

Then stood up certain, and bare false witness against Him. xiv. 57.

They all condemned Him to be worthy of death. xiv. 64.

Some of them began to spit upon Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him. The officers received Him with the blows of their hands. In the margin, this will be found as "strokes of rods." xiv. 65. It would seem, therefore, that, in the high priest's house, the Lord was beaten on the face with rods. This would fulfil—"His visage was more marred than any man's." It was an awful infliction, and agonizing in the extreme; and this was Jehovah's Servant, who had done such works of healing and mercy, as was so well known.

They bound Jesus and carried Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate. xv. 1.

The chief priests accused Him of many things. xv. 3.

The chief priests stirred up the multitude that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. xv. 11.

They cried out, "Crucify Him!" xv. 13.

They cried out exceedingly, "Crucify Him!"
xv. 14.

He delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified. xv. 15. This was the second scourging, by Roman soldiers, on the back, with the awful scourges, which were lashes with bits of sharp metal interwoven. "I gave my back to the smiters;" "His form was more marred than the sons of men."

They clothe Him with purple, and plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him. xv. 17.

They began to salute Him—"Hail! King of the Jews." xv. 18.

They smote His head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing the knees, they worshipped.
xv. 19.

They mocked Him. They lead Him out to crucify Him. xv. 20.

They offered Him wine, mingled with myrrh.
xv. 23.

They crucify Him, and part His garments among them. xv. 24.

They that passed by, railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." xv. 29, 30.

In like manner, the chief priests, mocking Him

among themselves, with the scribes, said, "He saved others" xv. 31.

They that were crucified with Him, reproached Him. xv. 33.

One ran, and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, "Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take Him down." xv. 36.

This was the last offering from man to his Saviour—some vinegar. And how much vinegar of scorn and unbelief has since been offered Him by human hearts that have equally scorned and rejected Him! Thus was God's servant treated: but God has highly exalted Him, and given Him the name above every name, even the name of Jesus. Over every page of this Gospel may be written, "*Behold My Servant!*"

MY LORD AND I.

I have a friend so precious,
So very dear to me,
He loves me with a tender love,
He loves so faithfully,
I could not live apart from Him,
I love to feel Him nigh—
And so we dwell together,
My Lord and I.

St. Mark: The Servant.

Sometimes I'm faint and weary
He knows that I am weak,
And as He bids me lean on Him,
His help I'll gladly seek;
He leads me in the path of light,
Beneath a sunny sky—
And so we walk together,
My Lord and I.

He knows how much I love Him.
He knows I love Him well:
But with what love He loveth me,
My tongue can never tell;
It is an everlasting love,
In every rich supply—
And so we love together,
My Lord and I.

I tell Him all my sorrows,
I tell Him all my joys,
I tell Him all that pleases me,
I tell Him what annoys;
He tells me what I ought to do,
He tells me what to try,—
And so we talk together,
My Lord and I.

He knows how I am longing,
Some weary soul to win,
And so He bids me go and speak,
A loving word for Him;
He bids me tell His wondrous love,
And how He came to die—
And so we work together,
My Lord and I.

MRS. L. SHOREY.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. MARK: THE SERVANT.

THE SERVANT AT WORK.

THREE features run through the four gospels —The Work of the Lord by *Prayer*, by His *Word*, by His *Hand*. The details of the first of the three will be more particularly found in St. Luke. The other two we shall gather up from the four gospels. The work of His lips and hand are generally called miracles. What is miracle? It is a sign that the words spoken are true, and that though what was said was contrary to human experience, none the less it has become fact. Hume, the great writer, said that miracle was contrary to experience. This is very likely, since “My ways are not your ways, saith the Lord.” Some one has said that “prophecy is a miracle in words, and that miracle is a prophecy in action.”

Miracles were wrought to *attest the truth of His words, and in response to faith*; not to produce faith. Thus: “I will, be thou clean” were the words He uttered to the leper; they were a prophecy, and they came to pass, contrary to the ordinary human experience. To the sick of the palsy, the Lord said,

“Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.” There was no proof of any power being in those words, till He added, “Rise, take up thy bed and walk.” The man doing so was the sign that the words spoken were true, and that he was not only a healed man, but a forgiven man—the miracle was a prophecy in action.

Miracles must not be a useless display of supernatural power, but must touch the enemies of mankind when man himself is powerless against them.

Miracles draw a crowd. The Lord always shunned a crowd, and withdrew Himself. Why? Because He knew that the crowd would worship the power, and not the God behind the power. Miracles are signs of some one *behind* and *beyond*, namely, the Living God.

The Lord always refused to work a miracle or “show a sign” in order to induce faith. Throughout the Gospels, substitute the word *sign* for the word *miracle*, and the value of the act wrought will appear more manifest. At the outset of His ministry, He read the famous passage from Isaiah lxi., describing the anointing of the Spirit for His great work (Luke iv. 18, 19). “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the cap-

tives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." That anointing remains, and "He is the same, yesterday, today, and for ever." Therefore, the same

RESULTS ARE TO BE EXPECTED

in the *spiritual* realm of need, as were manifested in the *physical*.

By the Spirit, the Lord wrought His gracious works. He has sent that Spirit down to dwell in the individual members of the Church of God, in order that He may fulfil His gracious purposes, and continue the ministry of help and life to the needy. The presence of the Spirit of God in the Church of God is in order to carry on the work of Christ on earth, and may not the Lord's words in John xiv. 12, be taken to apply here? The promise commences with "Verily, verily, I say unto you, HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME." There is the emphatic *Amen* of Christ to call attention to the following declaration, so that there shall be no passing by of the statement carelessly. Then the great condition of the promise, "*He* THAT BELIEVETH ON ME." Here lies our trouble: we do not believe the Lord means the words, "the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do." Hence

the presentation of the Gospel lacks the assurance and positiveness that should command attention and faith. The Lord, by the Spirit, is prepared to work effectively through the worker now along the line of His promise, of which the following facts are to be the illustrations. (We do not propose to deal with the physical healing question, either in denial or affirmation, but to confine our attention exclusively to the typical teaching of healing).

The total number of "signs" of all kinds narrated in the Gospels is 34. They may be divided into 7 groups, as follows:

1. Over Satanic power 6 cases.
2. Over sicknesses . 16 cases, 10 varieties.
3. Over death 3 cases.
4. Over sword-cut. . . . 1 case.
5. Over storms 2 cases.
6. In connection with
 food supplies 3 cases.
7. In connection with
 fish 3 cases.

St. Matthew has two peculiar to his Gospel: The two Blind Men cured (chap. ix), and the Tribute Money (chap. xvii.) St. Mark has also two peculiar: The Blind Man cured, in vii., and the Deaf

Mute, in viii. St. Luke has six peculiar: The Draught of Fishes, in v.; the Raising of the Widow of Nain's Son, in vii.; the Healing of the Spinal Trouble, in xiii.; the Cure of Dropsy, in xiv.; the Ten Lepers, in xvii., and the Healing of Malchus' Ear, in xxii. St. John has six peculiar to his Gospel: Water made Wine, in chap. ii.; the Raising of the Nobleman's Son, in iv.; the Impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda, in v., Lazarus Raised from the Dead, in xi., and the Draught of Fishes, in xxi.

GROUP I.—OVER SATANIC POWER.

Demon-possession was a not uncommon fact. Satan antagonized the Lord by directly controlling human lives. His action in men illustrates the *enmity of sin*. Matthew viii. 28-34 records the case of the two Gadara man, dwelling in the tombs. This was a Satanic invasion of the *home* life, and deliverance was wrought by His Word of power, and the men went home blessed of God.

Mark i. 23-26 gives the account of a *synagogue* case. The man was apparently a worshipper, and may never have disturbed a public service before, but the presence of the Spirit of God in Jesus roused him to attack. It is typical of Satanic power in those attending public worship, unsuspected, and heretofore undisturbed. Why is there no similar disturb-

ance now? May it not be because of the absence of the power of the Spirit in the worshippers, who would be greatly surprised, if not scandalized, by such unseemly interruptions!

In Matthew ix. 32-33; xii. 22, we find cases in which *the senses* of seeing and hearing are affected, and the lips are consequently silent. We are reminded of 2 Cor. iv. 4, "In whom the God of this world hath *blinded* the minds of them that believe not." Then in Matthew xvii. 14-18, and xv. 21-28, are the cases of two children, a boy and a girl. In the former case, much violence accompanied the demon-possession. How were all these cases handled?—by a word of power from the Lord. He spoke with authority, the authority of the Spirit-filled life, and there was immediate obedience to His Word. So striking was the result, that the people in the synagogue (Mark i.) said, "What new teaching is this?" It was so utterly unlike anything they were accustomed to see or hear. It was a teaching followed by results of a startling and permanent character—deliverance from the power of Satan. And now come two questions: First, Are we surrounded by men, women and children who are equally under Satanic power, though the manifestation of it may be different? Second, Have we authority to deal with such

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS,

risen, and exalted, through the indwelling Holy Spirit? If we have, are we faithful to our trust, are we using "authority?" Is not the great lack today, power to command? And sometimes while we are praying the Lord to save, might not He be waiting for us to claim His power, and speak in His Name? He gave the disciples power over unclean spirits (Matt. x. 8) as proof they were commissioned by Him, to act in His Name and on His behalf. Much ministering power was bestowed upon His servants that they might prove the authority of His Name, while absent and invisible. He added, however, in Mark ix. 20, a significant word, "This kind can come out by nothing but by prayer and fasting." In addition to the detailed cases referred to, there are a number of general statements as to the casting out of unclean spirits, such as Matthew iv. 24, Mark i. 34, etc.

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the conflict of the believer now is described in Eph. vi. 12, to be with wicked spirits in heavenly places. *We are* called to this war, and we might be effective in its prosecution.

Power for being fellow-workers with God depends on two things, the Infilling of the Spirit, and Prayer. The loss of the power to handle the demon-possessed

was keenly felt by the disciples, as recorded in Mark ix. 29. They had been successful when sent out two and two, but here were nine of them together, and unsuccessful. The power had left them. The explanation may be found in the words of verses 33 and 34. They had been disputing who was the greatest, and in all such movings of the pride of the human heart, divine power must leave.

The blessed Servant of Jehovah was always meek and lowly in heart, always filled with the Spirit, always in prayer, and, therefore, always ready to meet and deliver any oppressed one. The Apostle Peter speaks of Him, in Acts x. 38, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."

GROUP 2.—OVER SICKNESSES.

The sixteen cases of sickness cured may be divided into ten sections, as follows:

Fever, 2 cases. Leprosy, 2 cases. Blindness, 4 cases. Palsy, 2 cases. Dropsy, 1 case. Deaf and dumb, 1 case. Withered hand, 1 case. Lameness, 1 case. Spinal trouble, 1 case. Issue of blood, 1 case. These are healed, some by a touch, some by a word, some by a word and touch combined. In every

case, however, there was faith and obedience brought into exercise, either on the part of the case for treatment, or of the friends interceding. "He that believeth in Me" is still the condition for receiving His blessing.

The typical teaching of disease:

Fever represents the restlessness of Sin, temper.

Leprosy—The corruption of Sin, gross habits of Sin.

Dropsy—Heart trouble. "I cannot love."

Palsy—The inability and unconsciousness of Sin. "I cannot feel."

Lameness—Inability to follow, backsliding of Sin. "I cannot walk after Christ."

Blindness—The ignorance of Sin. "I cannot see."

Dumbness—The silence of Sin.

Withered Hand—The powerlessness of Sin. "I am unable."

Spinal Trouble—The bondage and depression of Sin.

Issue of Blood—The defilement and enervation of Sin.

These various forms of sickness are typical of the various forms of *sin-sickness* in human hearts. The pressure of the need assumes different forms, and is expressed in different ways. While the root trouble throughout is sin, the manifestation of its

presence is very varied, and the treatment is necessarily varied also. The study of the Lord's methods of healing is most instructive for Christian workers today. His conversation with the sick will often be found to be His message, through the Holy Spirit, to those who are conscious of the sickness of sin.

In dealing with people individually, therefore, it is of great importance to take time to

DIAGNOSE THE CASE,

and see in what form sin is making itself felt to their consciousness. With many, there is a definite and specific sense of need, not always of pardon, but often of deliverance from some phase of sin. For instance, one hears the expression, "I cannot see this or that." The trouble is blindness. Or it may be, "I cannot feel anything." This is palsy or paralysis. Or again, "I have tried to follow Christ, and I cannot." Lameness is here the trouble. Certain overmastering bad habits will indicate leprosy, while dumbness is by no means uncommon, shewn in the refusal to confess sin to the Lord, or to answer a question, or to confess a wrong done to another. Cases of great depression are by no means uncommon. A little careful enquiry will generally shew some bondage of habit that Satan has imposed, from which there is need of deliverance.

Let us first be quite clear in our own minds as to how far we personally believe and expect the Lord to act *now*. Do we think He can suddenly and perfectly remove a habit such as temper? or that He can take away the leprosy of lust instantaneously? or that He can open the eyes of the blind as quickly as He opened the eyes of Bartimeus? And then let us further take time to enquire before the Lord whether we believe He has given us the Holy Spirit in power, *and that we have accepted Him* in order to the accomplishment, by Him, through us, of works of mercy and deliverance. Do we expect gradual cures of habits of sin, gradual deliverances from the bondage of sin, or do we look for signs of His power, and immediate salvation? We probably would all agree as to pardon for all sin being granted: why not then expect and believe for the accompaniment of pardon, namely, deliverance and healing from THE VIRUS AND POISON OF SIN? And if we know it experimentally, may we not proclaim it as the "Gospel of our Salvation," and announce to the many that there is immediate, wonderful, blessed healing?

FEVER. *Carefully study the cases given us:* "The fever left her," Mark i. 31. "The fever left him," John iv. 52. How? By His Word commanding and His own life flowing in. Why not thus have

temper healed, and all other signs of a fevered character? It is interesting to note that in this first case recorded, the Lord was present and touched; in the second, many miles separated Him from the boy afflicted. But the healing is instantaneous in either case. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth."

LEPROSY. This disease is of unique importance, as being *the* type, in Scripture, of the utter hopelessness of sin. The disease was incurable under any treatment. Only God could heal, and that in answer to prayer, as in the case of Miriam, and of Naaman the Syrian. The instances of healing, therefore, are specially significant of the mighty power of God.

In one case, He touched, saying, "I will, be thou clean," Matthew viii. 3. And immediately new life went coursing through the man's veins. In the other, He was at a distance, and said, "Go, shew yourselves to the Priest," etc., Luke xvii. 14, and the same result followed. Faith in His power and will was manifested in the attitude taken towards Him, followed by prompt obedience to His command. So it will be again. Kindle expectation in the willingness, power, and purpose of the Lord to act as of old, and many a man and woman, now held by some horrid, vicious power, may rise eman-

icipated. We, as workers, at times lack the courage of faith to announce the Lord's power, and love to heal instantaneously, and we possibly suggest prayer, when the Lord wants obedience. The aim must be to get the case handled to this attitude of the lepers, namely, at Christ's feet.

In the study of the case of the leper, in Matthew viii., connect the action of the man with some of the utterances in the Sermon on the Mount, to which he was probably an unseen listener, and trace how he might have been stirred to act as he did.

The DROPSY case (Luke xiv. 2-4), seems to be a beautiful illustration of the Lord leaving a memento of a visit to a private house, one Sabbath day. He was not very welcome, nor was He much trusted, but that has no effect upon His loving purposes. If He sees a needy case, He will deal with it, and He does. Heart trouble is very common; the pulse of love beats feebly and irregularly, but

A WORD FROM HIM WILL CURE.

The presence of this trouble is indicated by such words as "I have no love," "I have so little love," "*My heart is so cold.*" Or by the general confession in the week-night prayer-meeting, "Lord, we confess that we do not love Thee as we ought." The sad fact is that this is *chronic*. It is impossible to

generate love by any self-effort—it must be “shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.”

BLINDNESS. The four cases of Blindness form a very remarkable group illustrating four distinct methods of imparting blessing. Matthew ix. 27-31. Two blind men followed Him. They were enquirers pleading. Isaiah lv. 3. “Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us.” They must have heard him, and were determined to have a personal interview, for they went into the house. Note His treatment of them. “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” “Yes, Lord.” “According to your faith be it unto you.” He was the “Amen” to their “Yes.” See 2 Cor. i. 20, R. V. In dealing with enquirers for light, do not try and prove anything, but draw the attention to this narrative, point out the similarity of need, and the Lord will again give the light. He can touch by the Holy Spirit, and open the eyes of the heart. Describing how things look will never give sight.

Mark viii. 22-26. In this case, they bring Him a blind man, and beseech Him to touch. Here are *Interested Friends*. The man himself may be reluctant, or non-expectant, or unwilling. So often, friends, nowadays, force along an unwilling soul, and “try to get him saved.” The Lord, perfectly understanding the surroundings of the case, takes

him away from them all, and deals with him *alone*. As a rule, get such an one away from the anxious friends as soon as possible; it is seldom wise to speak to a man before his wife, or to a child before his parents. Either they may chime in and completely spoil all you have said, or, after you have gone, may endeavor to "rub it in," to the effacement of any impression that may have been made.

This miracle is the only one of non-instantaneous results, and probably for a good reason, to teach us patience in our work, and to show how at first, in some cases, there is distorted vision, exaggeration—men appearing like trees. He will touch again, and all will be clear. We may sometimes have taken too little trouble to *clear vision*.

Mark x. 46-52. Bartimeus was a blind beggar, who started out, that day, to his usual place, with no interest, no knowledge, and no expectation of anything special likely to happen to him. But suddenly his interest is awakened by the unexpected passing by of Jesus. His case represents *sudden conviction of need* produced by the unexpected presence of the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit. His cry is genuine, his faith is active, but his obedience must be tested. He has no friends to help him, so two disciples are despatched to lead him to the Lord. A different question is put to him

from that used in the first case, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" It is the man himself who is to define what he wants and expects. Then comes the answer: "Lord, that I may receive my sight;" not, "Lord, give me a blessing," that vague, indefinite word that is so commonly used, and often means so little. A definite request can get a definite answer, and call forth a definite thanksgiving.

But note, in the story, a detail, very suggestive. "He, casting away his garment, came." It will very commonly be found that there is a specific hindrance in coming to Christ in some cases that have to be dealt with. The will may long have determined to hold on to some little habit, or grudge, or purpose, and this may have to be sought for and dealt with before the sinner can be led to Christ. This kind of work cannot be hurried. There must be time taken for quietly and effectually probing into things, and then, when all is ready, the sight flashes, and the blind one SEES JESUS, and follows Him at once. It is important, in all these cases of blindness, to avoid *praying* with the enquirer. By so doing, the attention is drawn off the Lord on to the prayer being offered. When the time has come to speak to the Lord, tell the details of the case to the Lord, but avoid ASKING FOR ANYTHING. Carefully observing how the Lord conversed with these men,

use *the same questions*, and seek to elicit the answer that will prove the faith is in exercise, and can obtain the blessing of sight.

John ix. contains the story of a blind man who was not an enquirer, who had no friends, who was undisturbed by any crowd or excitement, but whom *Jesus saw*. He dealt with him, taking the initiative Himself, and testing the man's faith and obedience by saying, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam;" sending him away, rather than drawing him to Himself. It is a parallel method to that employed with the ten lepers. Workers may often find that an act of obedience in some other direction, such as going to a friend and confessing, or making restitution for an injury done, may be preliminary to the opening of the eyes. What commits the soul to Christ is the important factor in the case. The act of washing, proving the obedience of the man, committed the Lord to him for the blessing he needed. He could not do otherwise. And similarly, a definite act of obedience today will bring most blessed results.

PALSY OR PARALYSIS. The case in Mark ii. 1-12, is very instructive, as showing two things. First, the value of faith on the part of others who are interested. Second, the close connection between pardon and power. The four friends brought the

sick of the palsy to Christ. Finding there was no access the regular way, they tried the *irregular* way, and succeeded. Perseverance in getting a man into the presence of the Lord is often necessary. Seeing him laid before them, the Lord went straight to the root of the matter, namely, *Sin*, and said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

SIN IS THE CAUSE OF PARALYSIS. No action is possible, no victory over surroundings, only an utter giving in of helplessness. But when sin *is* pardoned, the result is—

POWER TO OVERCOME.

After the word pardon, the Lord said, "*Rise and walk.*" This was to prove to the man himself, and to the large crowd of skeptical hearers, the truth of His first words. "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." How many, who profess to be forgiven, show no change in conduct, no victory over sinful habit, no alteration in the way they behave, in the associations they form. POWER must follow PARDON. The Lord Jesus pardons, the Holy Spirit empowers.

Take time with an enquirer to teach the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the next gift of God to pardon, and essential for the holy walk of victory.

LAMENESS. The impotency of sin is set forth in John v. 1-9. The healing took place along the

line of obedience of faith, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." The man tried to begin an explanation of his difficulties and disappointments, and expressed one of the commonest phases of hindrance, namely, waiting for some revival movement which may produce the desired blessing. But the Lord cut it short by a command of love. The past cannot be argued about, nor the possibilities of the future discussed. The Lord commands the man to do the impossible, that which he has never done before, and with the bidding came the enabling. The Lord has new ways and new life for an obedient heart.

WITHERED HAND. Mark iii. 1-5. How many a worker has ceased work through an injury! The Lord shows how He will renew the power to work, but it is a little costly. The cure took place in the middle of a synagogue service, before a large company, some of whom were strongly opposed to the time, place, and method adopted. Not an uncommon difficulty, even now! The man had to obey on two points—first, to "Stand forth," and next to "Stretch out his hand." Both were difficult, both were unpleasant, both were necessary. There are times when the confession of need and obedience in public is the method to be adopted, and thus the Lord is committed to His people by definite action. One danger is in making it too easy, in some cases, for blessing to be received.

SPINAL TROUBLE. Luke xiii. 10-13. In this case and the foregoing, the Lord wrought His work before the assembly of worshippers. The woman is here spoken of as "bound by Satan." Yet she was "a daughter of Abraham," a phrase indicating she was a true believer in God and a devout worshipper. For eighteen years, she had been going to the synagogue, but had obtained no help. The suggestive line of thought here would be—Find out the oppression of Satan; then whether the afflicted one is a true believer in the Lord. Next, show, from Isa. lxi. 1, 2, that deliverance of captives is part of His special work, and is given, as in so many other instances, to the obedient faith. The Lord is prepared to pronounce His

"THOU ART LOOSED,"

as definitely now as then, in response to faith. It might have seemed thoughtless, misjudged, and unsympathetic to make the woman descend from the gallery, walk up the floor of the synagogue, stand under the gaze of all. But then, "My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts My thoughts, saith the Lord." Are we prepared to seek more closely into a knowledge of His ways for each case as we may have to deal with? It will mean courage and a breaking through the rules of conventionality.

There may be many cases to whom it would be wrong to say, "You can be saved while sitting on that seat." Exactly the reverse may prove to be the truth.

DUMBNESS accompanies DEAFNESS. When the Ear is opened, the Tongue is loosed. Mark vii. 32-37 records this case. The treatment was in private, away from the friends who brought him, and it included identification with the man's trouble. He touched the ears and the tongue. The Lord so accurately understands the location of all the trouble, and goes direct to the seat of it. How can we handle the deaf and dumb? Generally by getting them alone with the Lord, and very tenderly but firmly touching what we know to be *the* sin of the life, reading this incident as the warrant for our action.

It is a great secret of success to show a person his photograph in the Bible, and to show how such an one was helped by the Lord. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Not telling incidents of other people's experience is the wise method, nor using illustrations, but pointing the mind to the Lord's action, and enforcing that Jesus Christ is the same today as He was yesterday, and will do the same things again.

THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD (Mark

vii. 25, 34) illustrates an unprompted act of faith, arising from her general observation. There are many who touch Him in the crowd unnoticed and unknown by us, but not by Him. He probably loves much those souls who approach Him all unobserved. *What* did she touch? The blue fringe at the hem of His garment—that which was the reminder, to the pious Jew, of the words in Numb. xv. 39, “that ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes.” He who wore the blue fringe was the only one who could say, “I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” Coming in contact, by faith, with the perfectly obedient one, who laid down His life for sin, gives perfect healing to a wasted life. It is

THE LIFE OF GOD SURGING THROUGH

the dying soul and suddenly expelling the defilement and enervation of sin. He is equally accessible to faith now as then. Suggest some of His PROMISES as the fringe to be touched—they are from the Man from Heaven, and are full of “virtue.” When “one who has touched” is discovered, an opportunity should be afforded for *telling it out to others*, following the precedent in the Gospels, in order to the further blessing embodied in the words, “Thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.”

GROUP 3.—OVER DEATH.

THREE CASES OF RESURRECTION ARE RECORDED. In Mark v. 42, is the story of the child of twelve just dead, Jairus' daughter. In Luke vii. 11-17, the story of the son of the widow of Nain, who was being taken to his burial, and who therefore had been dead some longer time. The third case is that of Lazarus, in John xi., who had been dead four days. Death is the wages of sin—not "the debt of nature." It is unnatural to die; all living creation shrinks from it, and all races of humanity dread it. The dead person, whether child, young man, or middle-aged man, is representative of the universal condition of all, namely, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1).

The voice of the living Jesus, the Son of God, alone could wake these dead ones. The voice of the living Lord, risen from the dead, and now heard in the soul, through the Holy Spirit, can now alone awake the dead soul. The quickening is in every case immediate and perfect, and there are the consequent immediate activities imparted for the new life. The little child is to eat; the young man is to take care of his mother; Lazarus is to be loosed and set free for serving his Lord and resuming the charge of the household. The possession of life in

Christ, and from Christ, is for activity, not for some selfish indulgence.

It may not be unwise to call attention to the fact that the raising of Lazarus presented more difficulties than that of the other two. So to bring a middle-aged person to life in Christ is a greater difficulty than leading a child to Him. Habits have been formed; grave-clothes of tradition are wrapped around; and a big stone of prejudice often blocks the way.

GROUP 4.—OVER SWORD-CUT.

In Luke xxii. 49-53, we find the full record of this act of mercy, this sign of divine power. The hour of the betrayal had come, and the band, led by Judas, had arrested the Lord, and were about to lead Him away, when Peter sprang to the front, drew a sword, and began to act in defence of his Lord. He hit out, and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. The Lord immediately stepped forward, with the words, "Suffer ye thus far!" which meant "Let Me have the use of My hand a moment!" for they were tying His hands behind Him as a dangerous criminal. He begged a moment's respite in order to undo the mischief wrought by the impetuosity of one of His disciples. He must help an enemy, and show the disciples the meaning of His

own teaching, "Love your enemies," "Overcome evil with good." Are not some disciples just as eager and rash now with the sword of criticism and harsh judgment, feeling called upon to rush forward for the defence of the truth, with great and apparently holy zeal, but with how often plenty of "ear-splitting," which needs such skilled healing from the touch of His hand! Not always are sharp methods to be adopted, but rather the bearing and forbearing. It stirs those zealous for the orthodox truth to unwise action when some well-known disciple, supposed to be loyal, turns traitor and leads the unholy band of unbelievers to take the truth prisoner; but the Lord is Sovereign, and is well able to take care of His Word, and asks for our obedient patience and faith.

GROUP 5.—OVER STORMS.

TWO NARRATIVES ARE GIVEN US OF THE LORD HUSHING STORMS. On the first occasion, recorded in Mark iv. 35-41, He had given orders for all to cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. It was a treacherous lake for the sudden uprising of winds, that swept down over the placid surface of the water, and in an incredibly short time lashed it into dangerous waves. He was wearied with a long day's work of healing, prayer, and teaching, and had

fallen asleep across the gunwale of the boat, in the stern end. When the danger became apparently very great, they awoke Him with the words, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" Little were they aware that—

"No storm can swallow the ship where lies
The Master of ocean and earth and skies."

He arose and immediately rebuked their unbelief, and the storm. The storm of fear and doubt in their hearts was a far more serious one than that of the wind without. So, today, the internal storms of fear in the hearts of disciples are more serious than the trials of external circumstances. We shall often need to hear His words: "Why are ye fearful? have ye not *yet* faith?" There was no excuse for their want of faith. They had seen and heard so much of His wondrous way of working that He finds no palliation for their attitude of mind.

Behind us, lies the great miracle of Calvary; so there is still less excuse for our sinful fears in the midst of storm. The Lord is with us as really as He was with them. The miracle, then, is symbolical of this phase of the Church's history—her present voyage to the other side, and her need to trust her Lord, though He may sometimes be as one asleep and unaware of the present circumstances.

On the second occasion (Mark vi. 45-54), He had gone up to the mountain top to pray, and had sent

the disciples across before Him. It was evening when they started, and by midnight they were in the worst of the storm. In the fourth watch, namely, between 3 and 6 a. m., came Jesus walking on the water towards them, saying, "Peace, be still!" He hushed the raging waters with a word. The position of the disciples in the boat, toiling in rowing, is representative of the position of the Church of God today, pulling hard against the contrary winds of erroneous doctrine, of worldliness, and evil of all kinds. Some, too, are fighting the great gales of heathen opposition, and the progress is hardly perceptible amid the dark and dreary hours. Suddenly will come the Lord, walking on the stormy waters. It is a second Advent illustration and story. His coming will be immediate peace, and the hushing of all the storms that distract and threaten the very existence of His Church. He has bidden His people watch and wait for this. The Lord is *with* His people all the time they journey home; the Lord is coming *for* His people in the time of storm, to take them immediately into His presence.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. LUKE: THE MAN.

HIS PRAYERFULNESS, HUMANITY, COMPASSION.

“Behold the Man.”—John xix. 5.

ST. LUKE gives us the Portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ as THE MAN amongst men, revealing his humanity, his sympathy, his authority.

THE AUTHOR.

Of the writer, very little is known. He is generally supposed to have been a Gentile by birth, and therefore a “Proselyte of the Gate.” He is only mentioned in three places, namely, in Col. iv. 15; 2 Tim. vi. 11, and Philemon 24. The first mention of his connection with the Apostle Paul is indicated in Acts xvi. 10, by the use of the word *we*.

His narrative is a biography, in which he begins, as do all popular writers, with the birth and early years and the surroundings of the child. It is all so natural, simple, attractive, and interesting. And as he proceeds to unfold the life of this remarkable man, one cannot but be struck with the fact that it is the Man from heaven, the God-Man, whose story is being told.

DIVISIONS.

- (a) Birth and early years. i., ii.
- (b) Ministry in Galilee. iii.-ix. 50.
- (c) Journeying from Galilee to Jerusalem. ix. 51-xix. 27.
- (d) The great week. Triumphal entry—to Cross
xix. 28-xxiii.
- (e) Resurrection and Ascension. xxiv.

CHAPTER TITLES.

- I. Birth of Forerunner.
- II. Birth of the Saviour.
- III. Jesus introduced by John Baptist and Genealogy.
- IV. Conflict in Wilderness—Conflict in Synagogue.
- V. Catching fish and catching men.
- VI. Choosing Apostles—Teaching Disciples.
- VII. Succouring a Centurion, a Widow, a Sinner.
- VIII. Meeting Storm, Demons, Death, Disease.
- IX. The Transfiguration.
- X. The Seventy—the Good Samaritan—the Bethany Home.
- XI. The Lord's Prayer—Meeting and rebuking Pharisaic Opposition.
- XII. No Fear—No Care—No Doubt—No Hoard.
- XIII. Loosing from Infirmity.
- XIV. Feasts and their Lessons.
- XV. The Lost Ones Found.
- XVI. The Self-seeking Ones Lost.
- XVII. Ten Lepers—Prophetic Discourse.
- XVIII. Unrighteous Judge—Self-righteous Pharisee—
Young Ruler—Blind Beggar.

- XIX. Joy in a House—Tears over City.
- XX. Faithless Husbandmen—Puzzlers puzzled.
- XXI. Things that will come to pass.
- XXII. The last Passover—Gethsemane.
- XXIII. Crucified between two Thieves.
- XXIV. Risen and Manifested.

The KEY VERSE is xv. 2: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." For illustrations of this, reference should be made to the feasts he attended in Matthew the tax-gatherer's house, in the house of Zacchaeus, another tax-gatherer; in the house of Simon, the Pharisee, where the sinful woman met with him; and in the house of an unnamed Pharisee, recorded in chap. xiv. Two of the marked features are *Praise* and *Prayer*, his presence kindling both, for He himself was always a man of praise to God and prayer for others.

The contrast between this narrative and that of St. Matthew is very marked. The former opened with the wail of the mothers over their slain children; it continued with the story of his rejection by his nation, and concluded with the pronouncement of the sevenfold woes, and the foreview of the future history of the nation in accumulating sorrow. This was only fitting under the circumstances, for the history of the nation of Messiah is one long tale of suffering on account of their sin in the rejection of Jehovah, and later of Jesus. St.

Luke, on the other hand, gives us another side of the story, how the Son of man came to be the Saviour of mankind, and was filled with the compassion and pity of God. Wherever He is known, He will bring gladness, and will bring men nearer to God. This is one great purpose of his narrative.

The PRAISE NOTES will be found to be as follows:

1. The Annunciation to Zacharias of the birth of a son, to be named John. It was the first kindling of hope in the hearts of those who watched and waited for the fulfilment of God's promises (i. 13-17).

2. The Hail Mary! the annunciation to the Virgin that she should be the mother of the Messiah (i. 28-33).

3. Elizabeth's salutation to her cousin Mary; as, filled with the Holy Ghost, she gave praise to God for the coming wonders of His grace to them both. "Blessed is she that believed," is the keynote of this song. It is still the keynote of all praise (i. 42-45).

4. The Magnificat! Mary's response and praise to God for His mercy vouchsafed to her. The dominant note in her song is God's faithfulness to His own word of promise (i. 46-55).

5. The Song of Zacharias, after the birth of John the Baptist, when his tongue, silent for nine

months, is once more loosed, and he praises God. Unbelief closed it; faith opened it, and it commenced thanksgiving and praise. The dominant note in his song is also the fulfilment of God's promises; and upon that the assurance of the further accomplishment of His will according to His declared purposes. (i. 68-79). (Students of the Word of God should trace out, in this chapter's songs, all the allusions to, and quotations from, the Old Testament Scriptures).

6. The Angel's announcement, to the shepherds, of the birth of the Saviour, Christ the Lord, in Bethlehem (ii. 10-12).

7. The choral song of the heavenly host that followed the announcement to the shepherds. Heaven and earth have united their songs of praise for the advent of the Redeemer (ii. 14).

8. Old Simeon's song of praise as he held the infant Jesus in his arms and said, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word." Once more it is the faithfulness of God to His Word that causes this thanksgiving (ii. 29-32).

9. Anna, the Prophetess, coming in at that moment, added her tribute of praise, for she spake of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Jerusalem (ii. 38).

Next must be traced a series of incidents in which the phrase *glorifying God* occurs as shewing the effect of the Lord's words and works upon the people. It will be an ever-increasing chain of praise.

10. The shepherds who went to Bethlehem and found even as the angels had said, returned *glorifying and praising God* (ii. 20).

11. The sick of the palsy, after he was healed, departed to his house *glorifying and praising God* (v. 25).

12. The praise was contagious, for amazement took hold on all, and they *glorified God*, and were filled with fear (v. 26). It was the unexpected presence in power of the Man from heaven, full of divine compassion, in strong contrast to those recognized teachers of divinity, who had done their best to bar the way of any to the Lord; so that it had been found necessary to get the paralyzed man to the feet of the Saviour by the irregular way of tearing a hole in the roof, and so letting him down.

13. When the Lord had raised the dead son of the widow of Nain, the crowd standing by *glorified God*, saying, "A great prophet has arisen amongst us, and God hath visited His people." It was the echo of the song of Zacharias in i. 68 and 78. Life from the dead is only by the visitation of God, and

so when the Son of God shall return, He will summon all the departed in the faith to meet Him, and what a great host will then glorify God (vii. 16).

14. Jesus laid His hands on the woman who had been oppressed by Satan for eighteen years, and made her straight, and immediately she *glorified God*. This uncommon and unorthodox proceeding of a woman being heard praising God in a synagogue, so incensed the ruler of the synagogue, that he uttered stern rebuke. But it was of no avail. When the Lord God is present, all human rules must be, and will be, set aside for the deliverance of captives, and for the glory of God. But the effect is that no flesh can glory in His presence, and this is what rouses antagonism from the enemy (xiii. 13).

15. The ten lepers had cried out to Him for mercy, and had obtained it. One of them, who was a Samaritan, returned, and with a loud voice *glorified God*. One wonders whether that loud voice was met by any criticism in those days by bystanders, as it does sometimes in our days. How afraid many are of the impropriety of hearty audible praise to God. Anyhow, cleansed lepers, who long have groaned audibly over their helpless misery, may well be splendidly vocal when touched and cleansed by the power of God (xvii. 15).

16. The next case is that of blind Bartimeus,

who, when cured of his blindness, caught sight of Jesus for the first time, and *glorified God*, and followed the Lord. Well he might, seeing he had been so helpless all his life. Now he is free from the bondage of blindness and darkness, and he walks in the light and follows the light (xviii. 43).

17. This case was also contagious, for all the people, when they saw it, *gave praise unto God*. How could they help it? It was so delightful to see the joy and gladness of their poor neighbour (xviii. 43).

18. The Centurion, who was the officer in charge of the regiment that kept the ground for the crucifixion, was the first answer to the Lord's prayer of: "Father, forgive them." He had watched all through those hours of darkness, had heard all the utterances from those blessed lips, and had no doubt been awe-struck with the conversation between Jesus and the thief, and when the end came with its unexpected swiftness, and solemn cry of anguish, he exclaimed, "Certainly this was a righteous man," and this is spoken of as *glorifying God*. It was the acknowledging of the truth as far as he could perceive it; and at the risk of losing all by practically taking sides with a condemned criminal, he found eternal life, and was the first trophy of grace won by the death of the Lord for sinners (xxiii. 47).

19. The Gospel closes with the disciples returning from the Mount of Ascension with great joy, *blessing God*. They had received the parting blessing from the uplifted hands of the departing Lord, and, filled with that blessing, they begin anew to send it back in worship to God from whom it came (xxiv. 53).

Glorifying God is always the result of joy in God, the joy of salvation. In Chap. xv., the great chapter of salvation, three times is joy introduced. In ver. 7, There *shall be* joy in heaven over a repenting sinner. In ver. 10, There *is* joy in the presence of the angels of God over a repenting sinner. In ver. 32, It *was* meet to make merry and be glad. Joy is in all three tenses; it is eternal in the presence of God.

Throughout this study, it is important to see that in every case, *God* is glorified, and no mention is made of the Lord Jesus Himself. He directed attention to God; His words and works made men think of God, speak of God, and honour God. Thus He is the True Man, that draws no attention to Himself, and proves His deity by His selflessness. In proportion to our drawing attention to God, we are like Jesus.

JESUS A MAN OF PRAYER.

This writer gives us ten different occasions on which the Lord offered prayer.

1. "Jesus also having been baptized and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him" (iii. 21). This is instructive for us in connection with our need for the manifestation again and again of the presence and power of that same Spirit in answer to prayer.

2. After cleansing the leper, "He withdrew Himself into the deserts and prayed" (v. 16). He had been in contact with the needs and sorrows and infections of sinners, and required the change of air into the presence of the Father to renew His energy and feed His life. His action is full of example for the workers today amongst the lost and fallen.

3. "He continued all night in prayer, and when it was day, He called His disciples, and He chose from them twelve, whom also He named Apostles" (vi. 12). How important this event was in His mind, the choice of those who were to be with Him! How strange would sound a pulpit announcement, some Sunday, in which the minister asked the members of the church to meet him for a half-night of prayer, as there were two or three teachers needed in the Sunday-school! He would be thought to be losing his senses, and yet he might only be found following, a little more closely than usual, in the Master's footsteps, in the method of selection of

certain to be sent out to teach others the way of life. May there not lie here a secret as to the cause of the inefficiency of so much Sunday-school teaching, in that the teachers are not selected in answer to definite prayer.

4. "As He was praying, the disciples were with Him" (ix. 18). Here we have only the mention of the bare fact that He was engaged in private prayer, and afterwards entered into conversation with the disciples with regard to the impressions produced by His ministry.

5. "And as He was praying, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and dazzling" (ix. 29). Here, at the transfiguration, as at the baptism, whilst in prayer, the heavens were opened over His soul, and He became filled with the glory of God manifestly. How shall we be transfigured? We are commanded to be so in Rom. xii. 2, where the word "transformed" is the same as "transfigured" in this history of our Lord. It will only be by prayer, much sustained and continuous prayer unto God, until He shall answer by the mighty transfiguring power of the Indwelling Spirit. No doubt the three disciples heard some of those prayers, for apparently the Lord generally prayed *audibly*, and thus kindled in others the praying spirit. What a mighty privilege to have heard

the prayer ascending, and seen something of the answer descending upon Him. If we were awake spiritually, should we not see more of the same transfiguring power at work today?

6. "As He was praying, in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples" (xi. 1). Then follows the well-known Lord's prayer, which has been used by disciples all down the centuries. Here again we see the effect of audible prayer on those listening. How He must have poured out His heart to God for them, for the crowds He had been mingling with, for the nation, for the sick He had healed. It must have been a wonderful stream of intercession that those men listened to, which took them to the very Holy of Holies. No wonder they asked to be taught to pray.

7. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (xxii. 32). Here we have the Lord perceiving the plan of attack by Satan upon His disciples, and mentioned one of them by name to the Father. If then, how much more often since, may He not have mentioned names of those whom He has seen in places of dire temptation and difficulty, and succoured them. He is the

same, and He ever liveth to make intercession for us also.

8. In the garden of Gethsemane, we have the threefold prayer, consequent on the threefold attack made by Satan upon Him, and the threefold deliverance vouchsafed to Him by the Father (xxii. 41). Into that deep mystery of sorrow and suffering, we cannot now penetrate, but it is enough to note how He prayed, and with what earnestness, being in an agony. And was heard in that He feared, or for His godly fear. He said, "Abba Father," and St. Paul tells us that God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son in our hearts whereby we cry Abba Father. The Gethsemane language is passed on to us for similar use.

9. From the cross came the great prayer which has echoed down the centuries, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (xxiii. 34). Then the whole heart of the Lord went out to His enemies. That prayer was answered in the conversion of the Centurion in charge of the guard on the ground, and as the Lord died he confessed Him before all. It was a magnificent triumph of the power of God amid all the awful scenes of opposition and hatred, and a glorious answer to the dying Lord's prayer.

10. The closing prayer was, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit" (xxiii. 4). It was His last utterance in the ears of men. He had finished the work, ending with the hiding of the Father's face, and now He once more says, "Father." He passed away from the midst through the gate of death, and now He lives to renew that blessed occupation in heaven.

FACTS PECULIAR TO THE GOSPEL.

This Gospel, recording, as it does, features of the Lord's life to bring clearly out the humanity of the Person, will be found to contain facts not elsewhere described, which will most vividly illustrate this. The following are the most striking of these, and will show His humanity, compassion, tenderness, and power. If never man spake like this Man, then also never men wrought like this Man. His word and His work as Man were exquisitely full of the love and power of God. What should this mean for us? Simply that if we are receiving of His Spirit, then we may—nay, *are to*, reproduce similar lives of tenderness, grace, and power amongst the sorrow-stricken, sinful, heavy-laden and worldly ones surrounding us now.

I. THE DETAILS SURROUNDING HIS INFANCY.
The writer gives so beautifully the old friends of the

Child, such as Simeon and Anna. Then we have the shepherds taking their flocks up to Jerusalem for sacrificial purposes, announcing the arrival of the Messiah in Bethlehem as the first evangelists of the Lord; and probably preparing the minds of the temple worshippers for His arrival shortly for the purposes of fulfilling the law. Their story would be to quicken faith and expectation immensely, and put the watchers on the look-out for the advent. Should not the shepherds of the flock of God today be more and more acting as the heralds of the second advent, and be thus preparing those who are more or less on the look-out?

2. THE ONE EVENT OF HIS BOYHOOD. In chapter ii. 41-52, is the narrative of the first visit to the temple, to attend Passover, and the closing scene of it, when He was for three days lost to His mother. The whole story is so human, so tender—the active mind of the boy, the keen interest in the wonderful surroundings, the anxious inquiries, the charm of such an intelligent seeker after truth amongst those teachers, the forgetfulness almost as to how time was going, the surprise in His voice and manner when He hears His mother has been seeking Him sorrowing, the unconscious position of the child, and yet the absorbing nature of the things which had so completely filled His vision, as His real relation

to things around Him was evidently beginning to dawn upon Him in a new way—Who He was, whence He came, and what was His mission in this world? Yet behind it all, there is the utter submission to the will of His parents, so that, although He had in His mind chosen to undertake the business of teacher, to which He felt, in His inmost soul, God had called Him, He makes no further utterance about it, but goes back to Nazareth, there to be apprenticed to the business of carpenter, and give His first illustration of what He afterwards so frequently taught, that He had not come down to do His own will. This was the first step in that pathway which closed with the prayer in Gethsemane: "*Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*"

3. THE NAZARETH SYNAGOGUE SCENE, iv. 16-30. Where He had been brought up, He would be *best* known. Where He was *best* known, He would be *least* approved. It was so with Him—the Perfect One; how much more with those who can lay no claim to perfection! There is always a heavy discount taken off all we do, and say, and are, where we are best known, as a rule. Why? It is human nature to despise the fellow-townsmen, especially if he shows some faculties a little above the average, and more so, if he turns out to be a friend of God. Probably both these elements were present in Nazar-

eth. His reading of Scripture, so manifestly pointing to Himself, His explanation of it in the words, "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,*" made such a feeling of wonder first, of intense excitement, that a young man, a carpenter, so well known, should dare to suggest *He* was the Messiah of prophecy, followed by a few terse statements pointing out the sovereignty of God in selecting Gentiles of old to be the recipients of His grace, all this roused the bitterness, and led to the first wilful attempt, on the part of those who were His kith and kin, to destroy Him, or at least to maim Him. It is a terribly sad picture, but a true one, of human nature. He, however, being full of grace, showed no resentment or anger, but passed away, shielded by an invisible power, and ready to repeat all He might, elsewhere, that would be for the blessing of His poor people. The story is full of incident that needs, and will repay, careful study.

4. THE EVENING MEAL IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE. Chap. vii. Here we have an illustration of a thought uttered, not many years ago, by an eminent servant of God, who said, "A man's character is known by the way he treats Jesus." Simon evidently had but a poor idea of the open-air preacher, for such Jesus was. A good man for the masses, no doubt; one who might be popular

amongst them, and might do some very useful work, but not the kind of man for the upper classes in society. Yet in this house there met, strangely and accidentally, a member of the ruling class and a member of the very lowest class, and between them was some One who was equally at His ease with both, and could speak to both with equal authority and power. The presence of Jesus is always awkward for the Pharisee, blessed for the sinner. His presence disclosed two striking facts hitherto unknown. It brought out the patronage and ignorance of the Pharisee, and at the same time disclosed the faith and broken-heartedness of the poor sinner, who must have heard those lips proclaiming in the open air: "*Come unto me . and I will give you rest.*" How seldom does the preacher practise what he preaches! Here is One who can, and will; and the needy sinner will find it out for herself. In the narrative, notice how tenderly He handles her, how quickly He relieves her, how easy He makes it for her. At the same time, how unsparing are His words to His host; how He shows him up before all the other guests round the table, in his true character, being guilty of refusing him common civility in the "*no water for my feet;*" of refusing Him common friendship in the "*no kiss;*" and refusing Him all honor as His guest in the "*no oil for my head.*"

The two characters come out in the two treatments He received. Patronage without faith will produce no message of pardon of sin, for there is no conviction of sin in the heart of the Pharisee. Faith, with a broken heart, will demand and obtain the word of pardon, with an accompanying word of power, "*Go in peace.*" The writer has caught the whole scene correctly. He has pictured the compassion and the tenderness towards the broken reed; he has drawn the patience and fearlessness and rebuke in all love and yearning toward the self-righteous man.

5. SENDING OUT THE SEVENTY INTO EVERY CITY and place whither He Himself would come. Chap. x. Here is the yearning heart for the multitudes, the best way to prepare them for His arrival amongst them, the kindly wise thought to send so many men who knew Him and His methods and message, so that when He would go, there would be a large measure of preparedness and readiness to receive. Here is seen the true humanity in accustoming people to Him, though He is from God.

6. THE BETHANY HOME. Chap. x. How one lingers in fancy round this scene of rest, welcome, homeliness, and loving care. Yet where He is Guest, He is also Master. He speaks with authority. He uses His opportunities for teaching of God. He welcomes an audience of ONE, and pours into

her listening ear things concerning the kingdom of God she would never otherwise have heard. How much is lost by not giving the Lord opportunities of talking to us alone, with no one to interrupt or distract! The well-known story is amongst the oft-misquoted passages. How frequently we have heard it said, and emphasized, Mary had chosen the better part. Yet such was not the utterance at all of the Lord. He drew no comparison between the two sisters. He said Mary had chosen the *good* part. It was the part of receiving, while she had given Him the place of giving, which is always His place of blessing. When we try and make Him receiver of our attentions and gifts, we displace Him. "*It is more blessed to give than to receive,*" is true of Him first and foremost. Let Him always have that position, and He will always occupy it, and then we shall have Mary's place of receiving, which is the GOOD PART.

This is more important than service, but gives the best preparation for effective and successful service. This may seem a hard saying to a naturally bustling, busy, energetic nature, which has the faculty of organizing work cleverly.

7. TWO BROTHERS ASKING HIM TO ARBITRATE.

Chap. xii. Much is said, nowadays, as to the social side and teaching of Jesus. It is made out that He was a great social reformer, and came to

inaugurate great reforms that should benefit the human race. In one sense, yes—this is true, but not wholly so. The grave question is, What is the order of procedure as laid down by Him? Did He ever interfere with social or political matters? The answer is, No. He refused to attend to such matters, even when brought immediately under His notice. Here is a case in point. Two brothers have a quarrel over property left by a father. One is suffering at the hands of the other, who refuses to act justly in the distribution of the property. In the appeal to the Lord, it would have appeared that He would have acted as arbitrator in order to set a wrong right. But He refused, and in doing so brought out clearly that He was not here to act as Judge and Divider in the matter of earthly wealth, but had far more important things to talk about; also, that in so many cases, the “love of more,” or covetousness, was the great bane of human lives, seeing that men were a hundred times more keen after earthly good than after spiritual good. Then followed one of the parables only found in this gospel, generally called by the title, “The rich fool.” Here is wise firmness, a determination not to allow any circumstances, however important in themselves, to deter Him from pursuing His one great mission—namely, to save the lost, and make atonement for sin. Till that has

been done, till He has been accepted as the sent One from God, to handle the great fact of SIN, He can give, and will give, no attention to anything else.

He is an absorbed Saviour. Once He was offered all the kingdoms of the world with their power and glory by the Prince of this world, in return for an act of worship. But He could not thus be tempted. What would an unredeemed world be worth to Him or to God? On another occasion, He was offered the kingdom of the Jewish nation by the people themselves. But of what value would that have been, seeing the nation was an unforgiven, unrepentant nation? Now He is offered a position of Judgeship by an individual. But He will not touch it, because the litigants have greater difficulties to get settled with regard to the law of God in the heart. There can be no easy or human road to the throne. It can only be by the way of the Cross, and by the will of God.

8. THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHAEUS. Chap. xix. Here is a simple scene of Divine compassion towards one for whom no one cared much, but rather hated, for his connection with the Roman government. But Jesus saw a human hungry heart underneath; He loved him, and had wondrous compassion on him. The arrest of the procession, the recognizing the fact that curiosity was an avenue to the man's mind and heart, the sharp, short, emphatic, business-like way

in which Jesus addressed him, the simple result in his obedience, all went to make a profound impression, and to result in Zacchæus' conversion to God. Up till that hour, the love of money had taken possession of his soul and life, and the man was good for nothing else. How suddenly all was changed, and the covetous man has become a liberal man and a righteous one, too.

9. AND NOW WE COME CLOSE UP TO THE END of the life of the Saviour to notice some few events that have touched deeply the writer's heart. The weeping over Jerusalem. Chap. xix. 40, 41. Those tears of sorrow are nowhere else mentioned. Some one must have described them to Luke, and made much of them. How He wept, when all seemed so bright and promising! How suddenly the scene of apparent triumph changed to one of almost appalling sadness! The compassion of the Lord is nowhere more marked than in this strange event. He knew the fickleness of the crowd. He knew the intense hate of the rulers, and how easily they would influence the multitude to disbelieve Him, and disown Him. His eye saw it all, not with anger, but with infinite pity and love, and with the clear prescience of what was only a few years off—namely, the overthrow of the city, the fulfilment of those awful prophecies in Deuteronomy, and the destruction of the national life and hope. It could not be helped. If it could

have been, it would have been. But the Scripture must be fulfilled, and there can be no averting the wrath of God concerning a rejected Messiah, and a rejected Holy Spirit. He knew it; He sorrowed over it; His heart wept its true tears of love.

10. THE WEEPING WOMEN. Chap. xxiii. 28. Such a crowd of them recognized Him as the Benefactor of their homes and families, and were filled with pity and grief. He saw and heard it all, but checked it with His unexpected words, "*Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves.*" He asked no pity, but He longed for them to be delivered from impending judgment. It was the knowledge of their state before God, and the impending doom, that they needed, and this He would try and convince them of.

11. THE FIRST PRAYER FROM THE CROSS. Chap. xxiii. 34. "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" Here again gushes from that heart of Divine and eternal love nothing but yearning for the salvation of His bitterest persecutors. His is "a heart at leisure from itself," and He pours it out in prayer, when any other heart would have been too much occupied with its own awful woes to have prayed for others.

12. THE DYING THIEF. Chap. xxiii. 42, 43. This most exquisite and touching fact is only found in this Gospel. It was the same Jesus pouring out His

heart's love and mercy, and with it His power to save at the very extremity of man's need. Seeking to save when there was no one to save or pity Him. Snatching a trophy from the enemy's grip at the last impossible moment, and triumphing over death in death.

13. LASTLY, WE NOTICE THE WALK TO EMMAUS in chap. xxiv. The quiet friendship, the tender inquiry as to the cause of sadness, the patient forbearance with the ignorance of the disciples, the long and magnificent exposition of the Scriptures in the things concerning Himself, the response to the pressing invitation to come in and share the evening meal—all tell us of His humanity and love. The Risen Lord is the very same Jesus. Then came the sudden flash of His true personality in the act of breaking the bread, the revelation of deity—the consciousness of His resurrection from the dead, and the opening of eyes, heart, and understanding.

THE MIRACLES.

An examination of the miracles recorded only by this writer, will add further testimony to the vision given of the compassion and tenderness that are so distinctly characteristic. They are six in number :

1. *The miraculous draught of fish.* v. 1-11. This was His way of paying for the hire of Simon

Peter's boat as a pulpit; and the payment was like Him, unexpected, lavish, and royal, and accompanied by an extra word of blessing: "*Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*"

2. *The raising of the widow of Nain's son.* vii. 11-16. The details given show His insight into the peculiar sorrow of the widow, and it was as if He purposely timed His journey to meet the funeral procession and turn it back. He turned sorrow into joy, and gave a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

3. *The healing of the bowed woman in the synagogue.* xiii. 11-17. His quick eye detected her in the synagogue gallery, and He summoned her to the front, that He might lift the bondage of eighteen years, and brighten those closing years with the light of God.

4. *The dropsy case.* xiv. 2-4. This was a memento of a visit paid; how He loves to leave traces of His presence where He has been invited and entertained.

5. *The ten lepers.* xvii. 11-19. An open-air scene; a response to an urgent cry of distress, an opportunity for showing the power of God, and a lesson in faith to the disciples.

6. *Healing the ear of Malchus.* xxii. 49-53. This was His last act of mercy just as the band sent

to take Him were tying His hands behind Him. He cannot bear to see the effects of the ill-timed, hasty blow. He will repair the damage of his over-zealous disciple.

In all His ways and words, what tenderness and love were displayed, and that true matchless humanity through which God was revealed to the hearts of men and women!

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. LUKE: THE MAN.

A PROPHET—TEACHING OF GOD, OF SIN AND OF PRAYER.

THE work of a Prophet is three-fold: FORTH-TELLING—that is, speaking *forth* the words of another, in the hearing of those for whom the message is meant. FOR-TELLING—that is, telling *for* another, on behalf of, and by the command of, another. FORE-TELLING—In the message from God there cannot fail to be the element of the future introduced. The principal topic of a prophet's message is the relation of God to sin and the sinner. There will be the attitude of God toward sin, and toward the sinner; God's treatment of sin, and of the sinner; the necessity of obedience on the part of the sinner; the results, to the sinner, of disobedience. The teaching will deal with, What is man? how has he fallen and become helpless under sin?

THE PROPHET, THE MAN OF GOD, must be *absolutely fearless* in the delivery of His message; He must be quite clear as to what He has to say, outspoken, and truthful; whilst He must be thoroughly sympathetic with the message He brings, and with

those to whom He brings it. Much of what He says will need explanation; it will startle and puzzle His hearers. He must, therefore, be patient: ready to explain, to repeat, to answer questions. He must bear in mind that He has not so much to adapt His message to His hearers as to teach them to adapt themselves to His message, and so be touched and helped by it. He must bring the great thoughts of God into *human language*, that they may be understood and believed. He must be equally at home with all classes of society, not *cringing* to the upper classes or *patronizing* the lower classes. He must get alongside of every one as God's messenger, showing the same interest and solicitude for each one apart from social position. Has He to reprove, rebuke, exhort? has He to warn, condemn, threaten? It may be more difficult amongst some than others; yet He must be faithful and unbiassed. Has He words of sympathy, advice, commendation, encouragement? He must show how fully He enters into God's reasons and gracious thoughts, that He may reflect somewhat the character of Him whose servant He is.

How perfectly and naturally Jesus did all this! How absolutely at His ease He was under all circumstances, and how perfectly He adapted Himself to all classes; and yet how absolutely He and His

message were one! He never spoke as a messenger merely, but always as One who knew God and the meaning of His message.

The parables that are found in this Gospel will illustrate all these features more distinctly than do the parables in St. Matthew, whose group was so distinctly dispensational, dealing with a very different series of truths. The kingdom of heaven—offered, rejected, in mystery, in manifestation—may be considered the great topic of St. Matthew's series of parables. The dealing of God with the sinner, and of the sinner with God, may be taken as the subject-matter of St. Luke's parables.

In all, there are twenty-two prominent parables in this Gospel, fifteen of which are peculiar to the writer. The seven found elsewhere are—

The Sower.

The Mustard Seed.

The Leaven.

The Wine-skins.

The Patched Garment.

The Lost Sheep.

The Vineyard and Unfaithful Husbandmen.

The first three of these appear in Matt. xiii., and the other four seem to have been isolated parables, suggested by special circumstances, and in some cases appear to have been repeated on different oc-

casions. This would be the case with regard to the Lost Sheep, Mustard Seed and Leaven. (Compare the accounts in the two Gospels).

The KEY VERSE of the Gospel, "This man receiveth sinners," will receive its amplification in the way He talks to them about sin and its *forgiveness*, its *penalty*, its *power*, etc.

The following plan of a group of ten will best serve to make the suggestion plain. They fall into two sections of five each, the first five showing the bright side of sin forgiven and the consequences; the other five showing the dark side of sin unforgiven, because unrepented of, and the results that must follow. (See Diagram on page 157.)

IN STUDYING THESE PARABLES, it will be essential to carefully note the contexts, the circumstances that gave rise to the teaching. The contrast between the attitude towards Him of Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman drew forth the story of the Two Debtors. The scornful interrogation by the young lawyer as to how to inherit eternal life, drew forth the Good Samaritan, in order to make the lawyer think for himself what should be his attitude towards the Lord Jesus. The favourite 15th chapter, from which more Gospel addresses have been given than from any other chapter in the book, should not be dissociated from the 16th chapter.

Man Under Sin God's Treatment of the Sinner

CHAPTER.	PARABLE.	DESIGNATION.	METHOD OF TREATMENT.
viii. 40-42..	1.	The Two Debtors.....	The Debt of Sin.....Pardon.....Freely.
x. 30-37...	2.	The Good Samaritan.....	The Wounds of Sin.....Compassion... Unlimited.
xv. 3-7.....	3.	The Lost Sheep.....	The Natural Habit of Sin.Sought..... Unrelentingly.
xv. 8-11....	4.	The Lost Silver.....	The Helplessness of Sin.. Searched for. Diligently.
xv. 12-32..	5.	The Lost Son.....	The Wilfulness of Sin... Welcomed.... Heartily.

MERCY.

xii. 16-22..	6.	The Rich Fool.....	The Blindness of Sin.... Interference.. Unexpected.
xiii. 6-9....	7.	The Barren Fig-tree.....	The Sentence on Sin.... Longsuffering. Limited.
xiv. 18-24..	8.	The Feast	The Excuses of Sin.... Rejection..... Final.
xvi. 1-8....	9.	The Unjust Steward.....	The Deceitfulness of Sin.. Dismissal..... Righteous.
xvi. 19-31..	10.	The Rich Man and Lazarus..	The Doom on Sin..... Punishment... Unalterable.

JUDGMENT.

The two seem to be a continuous series of instructions as to the acceptance and rejection of the truth.

THREE CLASSES OF HEARERS ARE GATHERED round the Teacher, the largest consisting of tax-gatherers and sinners, the general crowd of careless, irreligious people. The second and much smaller group was composed of scribes and Pharisees—the religious, wealthy, educated higher class, who were in control of the affairs of the country—an exclusive, proud, and unreachable set, intensely opposed to any change in matters religious, and considering themselves to be the guardians of divine truth. They were the principal money-making people, unprincipled in commercial matters, oppressive and grasping. The third group was composed of the inner circle of the Lord's disciples, for whose guidance many things were said and done, that they might learn of Him the things of God, as the future evangelists and preachers. The Lord, in these chapters, drew pictures of men as He found them, and as they thought of themselves, not as they ought to have been.

THE PORTRAIT OF TAX-GATHERERS AND SINNERS. He portrays them as wandering, helpless, bewildered, out of sight, sensuous, vicious, wilfully sinning; these features would include *all sorts* before Him, and amongst them the very poorest—beggars,

perchance,— in whom might be some faith in God, some hope for the future. All these would easily and eagerly recognize themselves and one another in the rapidly-succeeding stories.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES. There were “just persons that need no repentance” in their own estimation. They were like the nine pieces of silver that were apparently safe, and yet that might be disturbed by the same power that had already meddled with the one piece. They were like the elder son, who said, “*Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.*” Such language was familiar from their lips, and the crowd of listeners would instinctively recognize the description as fitting this class.

What is the message of the Gospel to the large crowd? The patient seeking and yearning for them as the shepherd for his lost sheep; the diligent search for the lost ones, as the woman with her candle and broom; the same welcome back into the presence of God as that given to the repenting son; the blessed reception of the poorest believer after death into the realm of Hades, known as “Abraham’s bosom.” The whole impression was that of the love of God caring for the sinner, seeking to save, and preparing to welcome the repentant ones. Notice

the use of the word "repent," in the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Silver, in which there could be no such act of the will, and the illustration of repentance in the Lost Son, where the word is not used. No wonder they "drew near" and that He "received them." His words melted, suited, cheered them, and at the same time He exposed the hypocrisies and frauds of the ruling class.

What is the message of God to the Pharisees? It was the ruthless exposure of their *practice* versus their *profession*, the "friends" of the elder brother, as much outside the father's house as the riotous friends of the younger one. Then followed the unveiling of the religious practices, given in the parable of the Unjust Steward, namely, the lowering the standard of obligation, reducing the amount of indebtedness, making out that God required too much, in order to gain friendships and make things easier in the future. Later on, the Lord accused them of neglecting the weightier matters of law, righteousness, and judgment.

The difficulty in the parable is the utterance of the Lord in verse 9: "*And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.*" The words are addressed to the Pharisee class, in what may be called a holy

sarcasm, and are not to be taken, as so often one has heard, as an instruction to make good use of money in this world, in view of the world to come. The phrase "mammon of unrighteousness" indicates money wrongly gotten, "tainted money;" and the challenge is, "Go on making this if you will, and make friends by means of it, for hereafter you and your friends must be together." Rather it would point to the fact that however successful and prosperous these men appear to be in their worldly affairs, there will be a place of eternal abode, after this life, of a very different nature; and then the Lord lifted the veil in the closing parable, and showed the "*eternal tabernacles*" of the prosperous, wealthy Pharisee. His profession of religion would be of no avail there. The simple faith and repentance of a Lazarus will take him out of his earthly sorrow, that has been so utterly ignored by the wealthy Pharisee; and now he is comforted, while the other is tormented. It was a tremendous, awful exposure; it was scathing in its vehemence, and yet it was the highest manifestation of love and grace thus to reveal so clearly the purposes of a holy God. The Prophet is seen as the true man of God in concealing nothing for fear of giving offence.

A few words on the question of "*torment*" in this parable. In the Revised Version, *anguish* is used to

translate the Greek word. This same word is otherwise translated as follows: Matt. xiii. 6, "*grievously tormented*," used of the helplessness of paralysis; Matt. xiv. 24, the disciples in the boat were *tossed* with the waves; here is the idea of restlessness and weariness in a storm that no human efforts could remedy; Mark vi. 48, *toiling* in rowing, here the idea is the uselessness of effort in attempting to make any headway against the storm; no possibility of getting out of the circumstances of the storm; 2 Peter ii. 7, Lot was *vexed* with the filthy conversation of the wicked; the spiritual side of the man is stirred by his surroundings, which nothing on his part can alter. Now transfer these ideas to Luke xvi. and we get this combination of helplessness, restlessness, inability to alter painful circumstances, spiritual perception of surroundings that must be endured. Such must be the state of those who reject the truth of the love of God in Christ.

Other matters are touched upon by the perfect Teacher, such as the impossibility of a disembodied spirit ever returning to visit earth; this fact is specially needed in these days of increasing spiritualism. Also that a re-embodied spirit would not have more weight over men's minds than the Old Testament Scriptures, "Moses and the prophets." In the allusion to the Old Testament Scriptures, we have

His authoritative statement of their value in leading men to God, and the refusal of their authenticity and authority can be replaced by no other revelation or by any speculation.

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL (Chap. xii.) was occasioned by the appeal of a man for Him to act as Judge in a legal dispute. By it, the Lord brought out the sin of covetousness, with the consequent independence of God in which such a man lives, and the unexpected interference of God in such an one's life. The rich man has been going over his enormous gains, and making plans for taking care of the produce of his estates; yet what has he done for the success of his property! He could only sow his seed, plough his ground, and reap his harvests—and between sowing time and reaping time, what? GOD—watching the fields, watering with His dew and rain, warming and fructifying with His sun, and producing, by His laws and goodness, the harvests that enrich the occupier of the soil. The *sin* is the practical atheism of the man, the blotting out of God from his life and thought. Then comes the sudden action of God in the removal of the man, and demanding an account of his life. It is perfectly fair and just that thus He should act, and let the man reap what he has sown.

In another parable, that of THE BARREN FIG-TREE (Chap. xiii.) a further lesson is taught, of great im-

portance for those who preach the Gospel. There is a popular impression that a person can come to God at any time, and He will have mercy; that the long-suffering of God may be relied upon to continue for a lifetime, if not indefinitely. Here the Prophet teaches that such is not the case. In the parable, it is pointed out that if a fig-tree fails to discharge the functions of a fig-tree, namely, to bear figs, it is in the way, and must be got out of the way, to make room for some other tree that will bear fruit. Then comes the plea for limited long-suffering: "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well. But if not, then *after that* Thou shalt cut it down." Give it one more chance to fulfil its functions, let there be mercy, but let it be limited to one more year.

The functions of a human life are to glorify God, and serve Him. If a human life fails to discharge those functions, there is no reason for its continuance. It is only in the way. There is a limit to God's forbearance and patience, a righteous limit—and this should be clearly made known to people.

THE PARABLE OF THE FEAST (Chap. xiv.) illustrates another phase of truth, that God takes the excuses made by men for refusing His invitation as the true expression of their purpose and desire, and *acts accordingly*. He is not prepared to give oppor-

tunity necessarily for any reversal of the choice. "None of them shall taste of my supper." The excuses offered are accepted as *final*, and nothing more can be done—no further invitation will be sent—no apology can be accepted.

How solemn and necessary such teaching was. It shews the love of God in sending such a messenger with such a message—that men may have a true knowledge of God's principles in dealing with sinners against Him.

PARABLES ON PRAYER.

Some of the parables already looked at reappear in association with Prayer. The question is, How shall a sinner speak to God?

Will God hear and answer Prayer?

How will He answer Prayer? on what terms?

Prayer is vital to spiritual life and to communion with God. If sin has interrupted such communion, how can it be dealt with, and communion restored?

Jesus, as a man of prayer, is the Teacher on Prayer, and He gives us not only parables, but definite teaching, which will be found scattered through the Gospels.

The other parables not included in either group are the Parable of the Pounds, to teach the going and returning of the Nobleman, the Lord Himself, and the occupation to which He calls all His serv-

ants during His absence. The treatment of the servants by the returning King is to shew the responsibility attaching to every Christian, and that the *position* in the glory of the next life is to be fixed by the conduct of the Christian in this. Used or wasted opportunities will procure, or lose, special rewards in the administration of the kingdom in the future.

The parables of the Unfinished Tower and the Two Armies are to give lessons in true discipleship as contrasted with nominal profession of such.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PARABLES ON PRAYER.

THE TWO DEBTORS is to teach that God can only freely forgive when there is the confession of "nothing to pay."

"Nothing in my hands I bring;
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

How easily is this sung; how difficult is its practice! The human heart cannot believe in God's *freeness* of pardon. "My thoughts are not your thoughts."

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT is to remind us that we never have anything to give to a friend who is "out of the way." There must be an immediate appeal to God for the supply of the Bread of Life, and He will never be unwilling or unready to supply it. The story is in *contrast* with God's way of

answering, not in comparison. The Lord's Prayer preceding is the prayer for bread for ourselves; then the story of bread for others. God loves importunity; we cannot be too importunate. He may apparently refuse, but only to draw us out in further intercessory prayer.

In the "LOST SON" there is, strictly speaking, no prayer at all. It is only *confession* that God needs from the sinner or the backslider: "Father, I have sinned"—and then the much kissing removed the possibility of the utterance of the prayer that had been composed: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." Here lies an important lesson to those who deal with anxious souls. The true position of the evangelist, or worker, is that of bringing a message from God that needs an answer; not bringing a sinner to God to present a petition that needs an answer. The Gospel is an offer of pardon, mercy, new life, etc. Is a sinner to ask for it or say whether he accepts it? Confession, not prayer, is needed. The one is difficult because it *involves* humiliation: the other is easy because it is something for a sinner to *do*. Prayer will come *after* accepting mercy, asking how to use it, how to live, how to glorify God.

In this connection, notice the parable of THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN. The Pharisee asked for

nothing; it was all a statement of what he was, or was not, to his own credit, by his own attainment. He was a self-centred man, seeking nothing from God as a sinner. On the other hand, the Publican prayed, "God, accept the sacrifice for me the sinner." It was the sinner putting himself in the right position with regard to the sacrifice for sin, namely, between himself and God, as his only hope or ground of acceptance, and then humbly calling God's attention to the fact, and claiming the free pardon and mercy. Thus he was "justified."

Returning again to the story of the LOST SON—from this parable, or story, so much is based to prove what is known as the Universal Fatherhood of God, and that expiation for sin is not necessary because not here referred to. If this were the only utterance of the Lord, and we had no other teaching, all such statements might be fairly inferred. Let us be clear as to what Scripture teaches:

First, that God is the Author and Creator of all life, as such in a general sense "Father." "We are His offspring," is the quotation from the heathen poet that the Apostle Paul makes use of in his address to the Athenians, not to *prove* the Fatherhood of God, but to correct the wrong heathen teaching of the day, and to prove to them the *one* origin of life, namely, God whom they ignorantly worshipped.

The expression "Fatherhood of God" is, in itself, misleading. Christ came to reveal the unknown fact that all true believers in Him were, by virtue of their union with Him, "sons of God," and were to know God as their Father. He taught not "the truth of the Fatherhood of God," but the fact that His disciples had become children of God by virtue of the new birth, regeneration. There—as declared in St. John iii.—is not a returning of a lost son, to be re-established in the Father's house, but the imparting of an entirely new life, the beginning of a new relationship, life from God, life in God, supernatural life, as distinct from the natural.

Then, again, no Jew would for a moment think of God pardoning and welcoming a sinner apart from a sacrifice for sin. It was, one might say, unnecessary to suggest it, so ingrained was the truth that "without the shedding of Blood, there was no remission of sin." A Jew was brought up from infancy in the doctrine of expiation for sin as the only ground of pardon. The *apparent* omission of any such doctrine would have caused no difficulties and raised no question.

Another point, the parable is not explained by the Lord as being typical of God the Father. It is *one of a series* suggesting *how* a sinner can be sought, saved, found. If he is helpless, he is sought and

saved. If he returns, he is welcomed and saved, as a father would welcome and entertain a returning prodigal. Without minimizing the force of the Lord's teaching, we must be careful not to *read in* what is not there. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him," is what the Lord teaches; not "Because God *is* a Father," which is practically the modern idea.

The parables of the UNJUST JUDGE and PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN deal with the questions of *persistent* prayer and *prevailing* prayer. Persistent prayer must be offered *always*. There is no such thing as God being wearied and troubled by our "continual coming." He loves the frequent sound of the voice of His children. He is wearied by false profession and formalism, not by constant pleading. See the alterations in the R. V., that greatly clear up the difficulty of the comparison between the widow slowly avenged, and not for righteousness' sake, and the elect, speedily avenged, because of God's "long-suffering over them." He may appear dilatory in avenging, and that will be because He does not measure time as we do. He bears with His people; further, He has fellowship with them in the oppression they undergo. His long-suffering means, therefore, an entering into their suffering, not an ignoring of it, and so the deliverance will be for Him

a greater gladness and glory. So pray on, pray on; but pray along the line of God's revealed purpose and will, and not like the Pharisee, who simply investigated his own good points of character. Investigate God's character in order to prevail in prayer.

In the parable of THE FEAST (chap. xiv.), the Lord brings out another phase of prayer in the reply of those invited, namely, "I pray thee have me excused." This sounded apparently a polite excuse for not accepting. It is treated as a petition, meant in good earnest, and to be fully answered: "None of those men that were bidden shall taste my supper." The pre-occupation of these men is their excuse, and the basis of their prayer. It is an awfully solemn fact that this condition of things is constantly recurring, and that multitudes must find themselves in the position of being eternally excluded from the Supper of Jehovah, the feast of joy in the day of Resurrection. (See page 172.)

To summarize some of the Lord's teachings on prayer from the Synoptic Gospels:

Matt. vi. 5-14. Pray as a child, because you are a child of the Father in heaven. Do *not* pray as the Pharisees, whose object is ostentation; nor as the Gentiles, who trust to constant and aimless repetition. Pray privately, simply, for what you need, and expect to be answered.

CHAPTER.	PARABLE.	PLEA.	PRAYER.	ANSWER.
vii. 41, 42.	The Two Debtors.....	Nothing to pay.....		Frank Forgiveness.
xi. 5-10....	The Friend at Midnight. Bread for others....	Lend me three loaves.....		As many as he needed.
xv. 12-32..	The Lost Son.....	Guilt.....	I have Sinned.....	Full Pardon.
xvi. 20-31.	The Rich Man.....	Despair.....	Send Lazarus for water.....	Not Possible.
xvi. 20-31.	The Rich Man.....	Remorse.....	Send Lazarus to my brethren.	Of no Use.
xviii. 1-8..	The Unjust Judge.....	Justice.....	Avenge me	Speedy Response.
xviii. 9-14.	The Pharisee	Self-Righteousness..	God, I thank Thee I am not as other men.	No Answer.
xviii. 9-14.	The Publican	Condemnation.....	God be merciful.....	Justified.
xiv. 18, 19.	The Feast	Pre-occupation.....	Have me excused.....	Accepted and Answered.

If you pray to your Father, you must be *like* your Father, in the matter of forgiveness, Matt. vi. 14.

In this way recommend your Father, because if evil parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more must you obtain, by prayer, from such a Father, immeasurably superior gifts, Matt. vi. 11.

According to the Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi. 9-13, pray after this manner: Classify your subjects as the Lord suggested. Do not put your needs first, but put God's great needs first. His Name, His Kingdom, His Will, are supreme with Him, let *them* be supreme with you. They will affect character, conduct, circumstances, far more than the usual style of praying for ourselves first, and often exclusively. "Give us," "Forgive us," "Lead us," "Deliver us" will take care of themselves in prayer when they come in the right place.

Prayer according to His Will is a Divine necessity; it goes without saying.

Prayer in Faith is another pre-requisite, Mark xi. 24. The faith must go before the answer, and claim it, and give thanks for it. Thus, faith will honour God's character and praise Him joyfully. The usual method is to pray and wait for the answer, then to praise and give thanks. The Lord teaches a superior way: "Believe that ye have received." Any true

child that does this will add its grateful "Thank you."

To such faith in lively exercise these great achievements are promised:

1. That fig-trees shall wither at the bidding of believers, Matt. xxi. 21. The fig-tree was the representation of profession of spiritual life without any fruit. This abounds on all sides. A withering of such would be a solemn exposure and a strange, powerful testimony to the presence of God.

2. That a mountain should remove and be cast into the sea, Matt. xxi. 21. A mountain is a difficulty of long standing, and a natural difficulty, part of the old creation. This shall go before faith in God. How many of God's people might begin now to remove natural difficulties, and so make more room for the manifestation of the life abundantly.

3. That a sycamore tree shall be transplanted and be cast into the sea, Luke xvii. 5, 6. This is a *growth* of long standing. This, too, shall go before faith and prayer. Habits long since formed shall be transplanted into an element that will make further growth impossible. How illimitable are these promises, and what vistas of possibility open up to the believing student of God's Word!

A model prayer-meeting, Matt. xviii. 19, 20. "If two of *you* shall agree . . . it shall be done . . . for

where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." "Two of you"—here is the clue to the blessing here promised. Two of such praying people as have been described—praying as children, like the Father, recommending the Father, exercising this quality of faith that affects mountains, fig-trees, sycamore-trees. Get such together, and the Lord will be there, eager to meet such dynamic souls, entering so fully into the laws of His operations in the world. Then comes the "anything" of possibility that is in harmony with His will. It is a glorious outlook, and far beyond the ordinary thinking or expecting of believers.

CHAPTER IX.

ST. JOHN: THE SON OF GOD.

THE KEYWORDS—MESSIAHSHIP.

“Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.”
—John i. 29.

THE AUTHOR.

THE writer of this Gospel was the son of Zebedee and Salome, who was believed to have been the sister of the mother of our Lord. If so, John would have been the Lord's cousin. He was a Galilean, and had a brother named James. Both of them were naturally of fiery temper, and were surnamed Boanerges, the Sons of Thunder. John was one of John the Baptist's disciples, and was so impressed by the twice expressed sentence: “Behold the Lamb of God,” that he, with Andrew, followed the Lord and they became the first disciples. Returning home, he was subsequently called from the fishing industry, and became one of the chosen three who were present at the raising of Jairus' daughter, the Transfiguration, and the going into Gethsemane. The three were also, with Andrew, the interested questioners on the Mount of Olives, as to the future events in national history and as to the second advent. (Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii.)

On three occasions, his impetuosity flashed out, namely, when he forbade the successful exorcist to continue his work of mercy, Luke ix. 49; when he asked permission to bring down fire from Heaven on the Samaritan villagers, Luke ix. 54, and when he sought for his brother and himself right and left hand seats in the Messianic kingdom, Mark x. 35.

It was he, who, with Peter, prepared the passover supper in the upper room, and subsequently asked who was traitor. He introduced Peter to the high priest's palace during those awful early morning hours of the trial of the Lord. He was present at his Lord's crucifixion, and led away the mother of the Lord to his own home. He was at the grave, and was the first to enter and examine the phenomenon of the empty tomb and the way the grave clothes were lying folded.

He was in the last recorded fishing incident on the Sea of Galilee, and one of the 500 men present at the great meeting of men only in Galilee.

He was a Palestinian Jew, and his narrative is full of Jewish customs, of Jewish notions as to Messiah, of the records of the hostility between Jews and Samaritans, and between the Jews and Jesus.

He has taken particular notice of Old Testament allusions, and is manifestly struck with their fulfil-

ment, and with the use of them made by the Lord in His teaching. For instance, we find mentioned, the Brazen Serpent, the Paschal Lamb, the Manna, the Water from the Smitten Rock, the Writings of Moses, Abraham's Sacrifice on Mount Moriah.

He was an eye-witness of all he records, and gives the names and particulars of many places and individuals. It is supposed the Gospel was written from Ephesus, where he was bishop, and the date to be between 85 and 90 A. D.

THE TOPIC OF THE BOOK

is the DEITY OF JESUS OF NAZARETH. Has St. Matthew traced Him as Son of David and Son of Abraham? has St. Mark showed Him to be Jehovah's Servant? has St. Luke portrayed Him as the Son of Man, telling the Bethlehem story in all its sweet wonder, showing Him in the Nazareth home, working as a Carpenter till He stepped out into the public ministry? St. John, passing by all these details and facts, shows Him to have been with God in the beginning, making all things, upholding all things, and then becoming flesh, *still* GOD, *always* GOD.

From the bosom of the Father he declares Him as the Son of God upon earth. Back to the bosom of the Father He goes after having passed His death

and the tomb. But of the Ascension, John does not speak as do the others. Is He gone? It is obvious He is gone to the Father—nowhere else could He go.

The KEY VERSE may be taken from xx. 31. "*These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name.*"

Or from xvi. 28, "*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world, again I leave the world, and go to the Father.*" This latter verse, in a very interesting and unexpected way, marks the divisions of the subject-matter of the book thus:

1. *I came forth from the Father* (i. 1-18), the introduction to the book.

2. *And am come into the world* (i. 19-xii.), the revelation of Himself to the world as the "*Word*," who "*was GOD.*"

3. *Again I leave the world* (xii.-xix), the revelation of Himself to the Disciples, before and after the Cross.

4. *And go to the Father* (xx.-xxi.).

The second division may be further subdivided thus:

(a) The Testimony (i. 19-ii. 12).

(b) The Work amongst Jews (ii. 13-iii. 36).

(c) The Work amongst Samaritans (iv. 1-42).

(d) The Work amongst Galileans (iv. 43-54).

(e) The Work amongst Mixed Multitudes (v.-xi.).

(f) The final words on accepting or rejecting the testimony (xii.).

The keywords are several, and each will require careful study.

(1) "The Father," occurring 120 times.

(2) "Sent," occurring 38 times.

(3) "World," occurring 78 times.

(4) "Light," occurring 23 times.

(5) "Life," occurring 40 times.

(6) "Witness," occurring 47 times.

(7) "Sign," occurring 17 times.

(8) "Believe," occurring 99 times.

(9) "Verily, verily," occurring 24 times.

CHAPTER TITLES.

A simple selection of Chapter Titles may be adopted, as follows :

- I. Eureka, "I have found."
- II. Cana.
- III. Nicodemus.
- IV. Samaria.
- V. Bethesda.
- VI. Bread of Life.
- VII. Feast of Tabernacles.
- VIII. The Father.

- IX. Blind man.
- X. Good Shepherd.
- XI. Lazarus.
- XII. Greeks.
- XIII. Service.
- XIV. Holy Spirit.
- XV. True Vine.
- XVI. Comfort.
- XVII. Prayer.
- XVIII. Garden.
- XIX. Cross.
- XX. Resurrection.
- XXI. Galilee.

Among the many lines of study, the following are suggested: The Personal Interviews; the Messiahship; the "I AM" Declarations; the word, "Verily, verily"; the Sent One; the Signs; the Announcement concerning the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is essentially for the World, and yet it is mainly composed of conversations with individuals and disciples. It is thus specially adapted to the individual, and to the believer, in any part of the world, of any nationality in the world. No book is found so popular in all countries, because of its intensely personal character. The Lord reveals Himself so closely and intimately. He has the same things to say to individuals of similar position and creed in the world. They are living words, they are "*spirit*," they are "*truth*."

The Personal Interviews :

- I. 38-39 With John the Writer.
- I. 39 With Andrew.
- I. 42 With Simon Peter.
- I. 43 With Philip, and xiv. 8.
- I. 45 With Nathaniel.
- III. 1 With Nicodemus.
- IV. With the Woman of Samaria.
- IV. 49 With the Nobleman of Cana.
- V. 1-9 With the lame man at the pool of
Bethseda.
- VIII. 2-11 With the woman taken in adultery.
- IX. With the Blind Man.
- XI. 20 With Martha.
- XI. 20-27 With Mary.
- XI. 43 With Lazarus.
- XII. 20-21 With the Greeks (apparently).
- XIV. 5 With Thomas.
- XIV. 22 With Judas (not Iscariot).
- XX. 1-12 With Mary of Magdala.
- XX. 27-28 With Thomas.
- XXI. 15-22 With Simon Peter.

In studying the variety of topics He handles, the questions and difficulties He meets, we shall bear in mind that around us are people in similar social positions, difficulties and perplexities, who can be helped by His words. Let us use, as far as we may, His method of conversation, always emphasizing *His* great central topic, namely, ETERNAL LIFE. Let us be disciples, and practice the lessons, to find how

living and up-to-date are His words, and how He is prepared to stand behind them and be responsible for them, as much now as then. St. John proves, by these narratives, that his opening statement is true that Jesus is the "*Light of men*;" the Light "shining in the darkness."

HE KNOWS. *Deity*

In chapter ii. 25, we find the words: "He needed not that any should bear witness concerning what was in man; for He Himself knew what was in man." It is the principle of this writer to verify his statements concerning the Lord. The following facts in connection with some of the personal interviews will illustrate that He knew what was in man.

(a) *Thou art Simon, son of Jona* (Chap. i. 42). He knew the family this man belonged to, and, therefore, the family history, and could at once give to the man His message.

(b) *Behold an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile* (Chap. i. 47). He knew Nathaniel's *character*, though no one had told Him anything.

(c) *Art thou a teacher in Israel?* (Chap. iii. 10). He knew the professional position of Nicodemus; possibly His visitor may have hoped to have avoided recognition.

(d) *Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband* (Chap. iv. 17).

He knew the secret sinful life, the conduct of the woman by the well, to her great surprise, and could therefore deal with her sin in pardoning love.

(e) *He knew he had been a long time in that case* (Chap. v. 6). The lame man at the Pool of Bethesda need give Him no description of his state. Jesus knew the condition, and dealt with it.

(f) *Ye seek Me, because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled* (Chap. vi. 26). Here He knew and declared the *motives* that brought the people together a second time, the secondary, disappointingly secular motives, not the desire for His teaching about God and life.

(g) *He knew who should betray Him* (Chap. xiii. 11). Treachery was no surprise to Him, though an unspeakable agony.

(h) *Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee* (Chap. xxi. 17). The story opens with Simon Peter and closes with Simon Peter. The family first—now the heart of the tried, repentant, restored apostle; and the full declaration, "*Thou knowest all things.*"

What a mine of comfort lies here for further exploration. If He knew then, *He knows now*—family, character, profession, conduct, condition, motive, ALL things. If He knows, He is not disappointed in His stumbling disciples. The Good

Shepherd cares for the sheep, understands that they are but sheep, and can bear with them accordingly. "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Trust Him utterly; obey Him implicitly; He cannot fail in His treatment of the need.

THE MESSIAHSHIP.

That there should be no question about this in the mind of any readers, the apostle records the mental impressions and the utterance of many of these with whom the Lord had those personal interviews.

(1) JOHN THE BAPTIST says, "I am *not* the Messiah, but am sent to bear witness of the Messiah" (i. 20). Again, "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God" (i. 34).

(2) ANDREW says: "We have found the Messiah" (i. 41).

(3) PHILIP says: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write" (i. 45).

(4) NATHANIEL says: "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel" (i. 49).

There is a splendid progression in these records, the personal perception, the fulfilment of Scripture, the recognition of the heavenly and earthly titles.

(5) The WOMAN OF SAMARIA says: "I know that Messiah cometh" (iv. 25); and after the statement,

“I am He” (verse 20), she goes out to the men of the city with the testimony, “Is not this the Messiah?” (verse 29).

(6) The MEN OF SAMARIA: “Now we know that this is indeed the Messiah” (iv. 42).

Presently, the opposition began, and the great dispute was waged among the Jews as to the Messiahship. The Jews sought to kill Him because He said God was His Father (v. 18). This was the same as claiming Messiahship. Again, “The Jews murmured because He said I am the Bread that came down from heaven” (vi. 41). In the midst of the controversy came the fine confession of Simon Peter, “*We believe and are sure that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the Living God*” (vi. 69).

Again the opposition broke out, “Do the rulers know that this is indeed the Messiah? Many believed—When the Messiah cometh will He do more signs than these?” Others said, “This is the Messiah.” Some said, “Shall the Messiah come out of Galilee?” (vii. 26, 41). So the discussion went on and became more and more severe.

The Pharisees showed their determination to deny His Deity by announcing that “If any did confess He was the Messiah, he should be put out of the synagogue (ix. 22); and the *blind man* who dared to assume it and assert it, was forthwith put out,

and, as has been said, "was flung into the very bosom of Jesus."

Then comes the enquiry. Chap. x. 24. "If Thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly." It seems to uncover the tumult of the heart that so many were in, wanting and yet not wanting to know. National hope was centred on the Messiah, but *could* they, dare they, trust the Nazarene. His compassion, tenderness, gentleness, works of mercy could not fail to impress them with the possibility that, behind that sorrow-stricken face and worn appearance, there might perchance hide Deity, the hope of the nation—the sublime subject of prophecy. But alas! for blind unbelief and sullen prejudice. Taught by their leaders, the people rejected Him, while the plea for His death was, "*He made Himself the Son of God*" (xix. 7). Did not the very battle prove the facts denied? Would an impostor ever have succeeded in arousing so much controversy? Not a word, not an act, could be cited as contradicting the statement: again and again He appealed to this as confirmation.

Today a similar controversy is raised over the same subject, and in many quarters the Deity is as fully denied as it was then. How shall we meet it? Notice the closing statement of Matt. xxvii. "Say His disciples came by night and stole Him while we

slept," and "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." It is awkward company to be in, that of the consciously lying chief priests, elders and Roman soldiers, heathen men, as against the little band of devoted, believing, spirit-filled men and women, many of whom laid down their lives for the Lord afterwards, rather than deny His resurrection, and actual presence on their behalf at the right hand of God. Unbelief gets us always into most uncomfortable society.

I AM.

Closely allied with the declaration of the Messiahship, is the use of the title, "I am." No title of Jehovah was held in greater reverence than that of "I AM;" no one had ever dared to claim it, or to appropriate it. It was Jehovah's own revelation of Himself to Moses, and through Moses to Israel. It is hardly possible for us, in these days, as Gentiles, to understand the awe and awfulness for a Jew to hear a Galilean peasant claim and appropriate the title of Jehovah. No blasphemy could exceed it; no death was too vile for the blasphemer—stoning, crucifixion, anything for such a one! "*Away with Him! away with Him! Crucify Him! crucify Him!*"

Such an ebullition of feeling and hatred can be easily accounted for if Jesus of Nazareth has dared to quote that name of God as HIS OWN NAME.

And yet there was no hesitation on His part in so doing. Strange that no other evangelist refers to it. Were they afraid to record it? would it be too startling for their readers? While to their faith it was clearly revealed, could they expect others to accept it? The difficulty must not be minimized in our minds. It was almost impossible for these Jewish leaders to permit any such assertion in their presence. But the beloved disciple seems to glory in the frequent use, by his Lord, of this title, and has given us many instances of it. In our English version, the emphasis is unfortunately very much lost by the insertion, in italics, of "he" after the words "I am." But let them stand without the "he," and note the emphasis.

1. IN THE CONVERSATION OF THE MESSIAH with the woman of Samaria, she has admitted the truth that Messiah is expected (iv. 26). To this the Lord replied, "I AM—*that speaketh unto thee.*" Not another word escaped her lips in reply; it seems to have settled the difficulty, and she left her water-pot, to go into the city and proclaim Him.

2. IN STILLING THE TEMPEST ON THE LAKE, He walked on the water to the terrified disciples, saying, "I AM" (vi. 20); and immediately there was a great calm.

3. IN THE CONTROVERSY that was very fierce round Him, the Lord at length said, "When ye have

lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am" (viii. 28). Here He meant that His resurrection would be the test of His deity, of His eternity. He unveiled *their* purpose to have Him crucified; He unveiled God's purpose in the resurrection to thus prove He was truly Jehovah, Israel's God and Saviour.

4. A CONTINUATION OF THE ARGUMENT leads up to the closing statement, "*Before Abraham was, I AM.* Then took they up stones to stone Him" (viii. 58). And no wonder. He had appeared before them as a Teacher, a Preacher, a Rabbi: but now He asserts His Godhead, and position before Abraham, whom they had referred to as their ancestor. It was a magnificent challenge to their unbelief; it was fatal to His position. And He knew it; at whatever cost, the truth must be announced, that they may be without excuse.

5. THE BAND FROM THE CHIEF PRIEST, under Judas Iscariot, had come to arrest Him; and again the beloved disciple supplies details not given elsewhere, bearing upon the Messiahship. To the question, "Whom seek ye?" (xviii. 5-8), and the reply, "Jesus of Nazareth," the Lord answered again, "I AM." It was the one flash of His Deity before those hardened men that in an instant struck them to the ground. For "as soon as He had said unto

them *I am*, they went backward and fell to the ground.”

Again the Lord put the question, with the same answer, and the further declaration, “I have told you I AM,” and suffered them to take Him. There could be no question, therefore, as to their responsibility in the chain of events that followed the arrest. There could be no mistaking the divine power or presence. What an awful fact for that poor man Judas to face, and to face for eternity!

In addition to the foregoing, we find our Lord using the word “I AM” as a prefix to seven fresh revelations of Himself to the disciples:

(1) I am the Bread of Life. vi. 35, 41, etc.

(2) I am the Light of the World. ix. 5.

(3) I am the Door. x. 7.

(4) I am the Good Shepherd. x. 11, 13.

(5) I am the Resurrection and the Life. xi. 25.

(6) I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. xiv. 6.

(7) I am the True Vine. xv. 1.

The dominant thought is LIFE throughout: He is the Life here, the Life hereafter; the Sustainer of Life, the Preserver of Life as Good Shepherd; the Entrance into Life, the Door; the Strength of Life, the Vine. He expands the original revelation of Jehovah's Name as it had never before been expanded. He throws light on God's character, heart,

love, purpose, and promise, that men may believe and worship.

It would be of deep interest and profit to trace the types or suggestions in the history of Jehovah with Israel, that point to this sevenfold declaration.

THE WORLD.

Another feature of the Gospel is that St. John emphasizes the relation of the Lord to the World as no other writer does. The Lord's words in reference thereto had deeply impressed him, as evidenced in his First Epistle, written some years later, and being, it is believed, later than the Revelation, and therefore the *last* communication of the Lord through the Holy Spirit to the Church while in the world. In the epistle, there are twenty-three mentions of this word, in connection with its prince, principles, attitude towards God, spirit, treatment of God's people, and "lying in the wicked one." The apostle gives no hint of subjugation, or conversion, or improvement, so long as the Prince of Darkness is at liberty and holds possession of the World.

In the Gospel, the word occurs 78 times, 42 of which are found in chapters xiii.-xviii.

The main statements in the Gospel are as follows:

The world was *made* by Him, and was ignorant of Him when He came to it. Chap. i. 10.

The *sin* of the world was that which drew Him from heaven, that He might be the Lamb of God to bear it away, and thus redeem the world for God. i. 29.

The *love of God* for the world was shown in giving His Son. iii. 16.

But He only encountered the hatred of the world. vii. 17. Ignorance first, then sin, then hatred, then death.

He *speaks* to the world—not to the Jewish nation, not to disciples merely; hence the imperishable Scriptures must be translated into all languages, and be distributed throughout the world. Chap. viii. 26. (How far are we in harmony with the Lord's mind, and statement, and purpose, and are we helping in the *circulation of His Word*?)

The *Light* of the world. Chap. ix. 5. He found only darkness, and would Himself be light.

The *judgment* of the world an absolute necessity. Chap. xii. 31.

The *Prince* of this world—its Ruler—cannot be ignored, for His principles hold sway, and must be dealt with. xii. 31.

In the last prayer before the Cross, how the world is *upon His heart*, although there comes that mysterious sentence, "I pray not for the world." His prayer is, however, "That the world may believe, . . .

that the world may know." Chap. xvii. 21, 23. How shall the world believe and know? Only through the lives and testimonies of disciples after the Lord shall have left and the Holy Spirit shall have come.

The world will be *too small a book-case* to contain the volumes that might be written of the works and words of Jesus. Chap. xxi. 25. How stupendous must that life be, how various those energies, how infinite the Person! *Not* the Son of God? *not* from heaven? *not* the Risen Lord, the Eternal Son? How absurd and impossible such statements and conclusions.

"THOU ART THE SON OF GOD."

VERILY, VERILY.

This prefix is another special feature of the narrative, and is peculiar to St. John. It introduces some of the greatest utterances of the Lord, that men might heed Him and obey His word.

Chap. iii. 3, 5: Introduces the *great declaration* concerning the necessity of the new birth, if any would see or enter the kingdom of God.

Chap. iii. 11: Affirms the *absolute accuracy* of the Lord's words; they are most solemnly put by Him above dispute.

Chap. v. 19: Announces the *dependence* of the Son upon the Father in all things.

Chap. v. 24, 25: Two great declarations as to *how* to obtain eternal life and hearing the voice of the Son of God.

Chap. vi. 26: The disclosing of the *impure* motives of the crowds that flocked around Him; He was not in any danger of being deceived by their presence and led to any false issues.

Chap. vi. 32, 47, 53: Life *alone* can be maintained through feeding on Him as the true Bread of Life.

Chap. viii. 34: Sin is a *master*—not something that can easily be thrown off. This is one of the most solemn and important of the Lord's statements.

Chap. viii. 51: Declares the *perfect security* of him who keeps the Lord's word; it is a great utterance on the powerlessness of death.

Chap. viii. 58: Is His *magnificent* assertion, "Before Abraham was, I am."

Chap. x. 17: In these two verses, He declares His *relation* as "Shepherd," and "Door" into the sheepfold, and thus asserts His personal responsibility for the security of those committed to Him.

Chap. xii. 24: He is nearing the *end* of His public ministry; the shadows of the cross are beginning to fall across His soul, and He declares the great

truth of life through death, under the symbol of the corn of wheat.

In chap. xiii., there will be found *four* words of His with this introduction; and in the great closing discourse in the upper room, on the night of the betrayal, He declares, in xiv. 12, the great future of the believing disciple in the matter of service. In xvi. 20, He speaks of the turning of the future great sorrow into joy, and in xvi. 23, of the purpose to answer prayer.

THIS GREAT GROUP may be arranged in different ways, and will make an important pattern of truth proceeding from the great Teacher's lips as the Son of God. We need have no doubt of the accuracy and power of these words of His. They will stand the test of all human enquiry, and be found the veritable Rock of Divine Truth for the believer in all time.

CHAPTER X.

ST. JOHN: THE SON OF GOD.

THE SIGNS.

THE gospel opens with the statement, "In the beginning was the Word—and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." It appears to be a principle of this writer to illustrate his statements concerning the Lord by a narrative of such facts as will confirm them. Is He the WORD? Then what He says will come to pass on earth as well as in the past aeons of creation. Were all things made by Him? Then He can act as Creator now as well as of old. Therefore, if the Word be made flesh, and dwells among men, there will be clear proofs of His being the Word that was from the beginning, in that what He says will be. Again he says, "In Him was Life." This will also be proved by the signs He will work. For did He not Himself say. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly?" The seven signs recorded are, with two exceptions, only found in this gospel. They are given in a certain

order, and it would appear that this order is designed to teach the believer his own history, as he shall listen to his Lord. Then, again, there are, as already pointed out, seven special declarations of His, prefaced with the two great Jehovistic words, "I am," and these seven fit over the seven signs with a beautiful accuracy. Further, we shall note that these signs wrought by the Word are unaccompanied by the working of His hand, as so distinctly recorded in the group found in St. Mark's gospel.

In the R. V., the word "signs" has replaced the word "miracles." The word occurs 17 times, and should be carefully looked up. These signs were never wrought to *produce* faith, but to *confirm* faith. It was not the Lord's desire ever to work a wonder in order to startle, or to create surprise, or draw a crowd, or make any sensation.

First Sign. ii. 1-11. *The water made wine.* This is the beginning of miracles wrought in Cana of Galilee. It was in a private house; it was symbolical of all He would do, namely, supply what is lacking in human lives and hearts. Throughout Scripture, wine is used as a symbol of joy. "They wanted wine" conveys to us the fact, They wanted joy. All earthly festivities lack joy. It never lasts out, it runs short. Only the Lord Jesus can supply the

lacking element, and it is always fortunate if the hosts have had the wisdom to invite Him to be present among the guests. In the narrative, we find that His mother made known to Him the need that had arisen, and then said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." This has been called *the Gospel of the blessed Virgin Mary*. It is a gospel, for the secret of all joy and blessing is obedience to His word and will. His first word is, "Fill the waterpots with water." These were large jars that had been used for the customary ablutions for the guests, and so large had the marriage party been, that these jars were empty. It seemed an unnecessary thing to order, but fortunately those servants were devoid of the modern habit of questioning and discussing every order before obeying it, and they immediately did what was enjoined. Then came the second command from His lips, "Draw out now and bear unto the governor of the feast." This needed greater faith than did the first. But the servants have learned well their first lesson, "WHATSOEVER He saith unto you, do it." And they had the courage and faith to draw off some of that water into the wine vessels, as though it were wine. What would the governor say if he were offered water as if it were wine? The change did not take place apparently

till they were literally pouring from the vessel into the drinking cup, and THEN it was wine, and such good quality as to call forth the remark as to its goodness. This is the great introductory sign. He has come to give joy. Do what He commands, for He is the Word that was from the beginning, and there will be fulness of joy.

Second Sign. iv. 46-54. *The nobleman's son healed of fever.* In this case, the father has come seeking the Lord's help in the words, "Sir, come down ere my child die." After a brief conversation, the "Word" speaks, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." This is the gift of life. It is the beginning of joy. How the arrival of a new life gives joy to a family. There is no joy like it in the human experience. The fever may be suggestive of the destructive power of sin, and only His word can counteract it. The father, on his return, finds that the very hour when the words were spoken, the boy recovered. What joy for the sick boy! what joy for the father, for the mother, for the servants, for all the household! They all shared it.

Third Sign. v. 1-9. *The impotent man cured.* What is life without strength? Life is given, but He will give life abundantly. This third sign, then, is to illustrate the expansion and development of life. How does He do this? He only speaks. First

He says, "Dost thou will to be made whole?" The lame man, like most men, is unable to give a straight answer to a straight question, and begins to talk round the matter. Then, without more loss of time, the Lord says, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." He did not, as in some other cases, take him by the hand. The sign is to illustrate that He is the "Word" still, and that He expects, nay demands, obedience, and with that comes the enabling power. In this case, there is joy, the joy of abounding life.

Fourth Sign. vi. 1-13. *The five thousand fed.* How can strength be maintained? Only by food. So this next recorded incident will illustrate this fact. He who has given life and strength, will now give food to maintain it; not in any scant measure. The great crowd has as much as it can eat, and then there is bread enough and to spare, for it is "the Father's house" they are gathered into. Notice, again, the method of His blessing. He first enquires what there is, and then, having taken the boy's little basket full of five barley cakes and two small fishes, He blesses them and then gives to the disciples, with the command to distribute it amongst the people. There is nothing *done*, only something *said*. All is so quiet, so simple, so easy—the words of thanks to the Father, the words of

command to the disciples, and the great multitude satisfied. Was there not joy here also? Is it not parallel with the first sign? Does not all He says happen and accomplish that which ministers *joy*?

Fifth Sign. vi. 14-21. *Stilling the Storm.* Here we see the disciples in danger, surrounded by a tempest which is frightening them, for they are powerless against it all. To them, in the fourth watch—that is, between three and six in the morning—comes Jesus walking on the water, and He says, “It is I, be not afraid,” and to the storm, “Peace; be still.” Immediately Creation hears the voice of its Creator, and obeys. The “Word,” Who made all things, hushes the warring elements by His presence. Was not this *joy* to those troubled, toiling men? So He teaches that the life He gives He will also defend and watch over, preserving from all evil, and caring for it that He may again and again give the fulness of joy.

Sixth Sign. ix. *Opening the eyes of the blind man.* In the opening chapter is the statement that the Life is the Light. Here John shews us an example of this. This man, born blind, unexpectedly comes into contact with Him Who is the Life, and learns it by finding He is the Light. Those blind eyes cannot remain so in His presence. But how does He handle him? Apparently, there is a de-

parture from the method which has been suggested as pursued, namely, working by His word only. He makes clay with His spittle, and anoints the eyes of the man, accompanying it with the word, "Go, wash." This act was in no way necessary to produce the blessing. May it not have been to let the man know the Lord had full sympathy with his state, and then, to give him an object in obeying the command to wash? It was apparently to stimulate his faith and obedience. The blessing lay in the man's obedience to the Lord's word. For he went and washed, and came seeing. Is there not wonderful joy for him in this sudden opening to him of a new world? The effect upon him is that he becomes a *worshipper*. This is the occupation of all who have life, and life abundantly. Worship is to be the business here and hereafter.

Seventh Sign. xi. *Lazarus raised from the dead.* This last of the series is the culmination of joy, the greatest display of His power. Three utterances fall from His lips: First, "Take ye away the stone." Then after prayer to the Father, "Lazarus, come forth." Then he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, whereupon Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go." Three words of command demanding obedience from those to whom they were addressed, and then the joy broke forth in the resurrection.

Against these seven signs, let us put the seven great I AM declarations.

First Sign. *Water made wine.* I AM THE TRUE VINE. He will always turn the ordinary of our life into the extraordinary of His life given to us. From the true vine, always the best wine.

Second Sign. *The boy restored.* I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. He had said, "Go thy way, thy son LIVETH," and the father found it was the TRUTH that the Lord had spoken.

Third Sign. The impotent man had lain, for many years, in his helplessness, waiting for some one to put him into the pool of Bethesda, but he had got no further than the porch. When the Son of God came along, He put him into the pool of blessing, for He can say, I AM THE DOOR, by ME if any man enter in he shall be saved.

Fourth Sign. The five thousand fed is followed by the exposition of His own words, I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE, and he that eateth Me, he shall live by Me.

Fifth Sign. *Stilling the tempest.* It was dark and stormy, and the disciples were alone, for He had gone away up the mountain to spend the night in prayer. Has He forgotten them? Does He not know what is happening to them? Yes; for He says, I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD, and know my sheep. The darkness and the light are both alike to Him.

He is not far off, after all, but near enough to help and save.

Sixth Sign. *Opening the blind eyes.* In this case, He says, I AM THE LIGHT, and so the enlightened soul can follow Him and never again walk in darkness.

Seventh Sign. *Raising Lazarus.* I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. Looking once more over this group of pictures, do we not see how they are the history of Christ's work in each one who believes in Him? Life, Strength, Food, Deliverance, Enlightenment to make us worshippers, and then, the last act of all—Resurrection. This is the last thing He will have to do for us here below. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ shall rise first." He began His first series at a marriage feast on earth. Will He not begin His second series of signs at another marriage feast, namely, at the "marriage of the Lamb," and to this series there shall be no end? An ever-increasing manifestation of His power and glory, as the *Son of God*, shall follow, and we shall go no more out from His presence. That will be FULNESS OF JOY indeed.

THE WITNESS-BEARING.

Another feature of the Gospel is that the Deity of the Lord is proved by the testimony of witnesses,

and confirmed by the working of signs. The four great witness-bearers are:

1. THE FATHER, v. 37.—He bore witness at the baptism, when John the Baptist heard the voice from the excellent majesty, “Thou art My beloved Son.”

2. THE SPIRIT, xv. 26.—He has come, as predicted, and He is daily bearing witness of the crucifixion and resurrection, and that He is the Son of God.

3. THE SCRIPTURES, v. 39.—“They bear witness of Me.” His appeal to written Scripture was frequent as the reason for what He said and did. They proved His Deity to the devout, pious believer.

4. THE WORKS, v. 36.—His acts, miracles, habits of life, ways of living, all went to prove that He was the Son of God from heaven. If this fourfold testimony were rejected, nothing remained to appeal to; it was enough, it was more than enough.

Yet in addition, the writer gives a list of ten men and women who bore testimony to His Deity, from John the Baptist, in chap. i., to Thomas’ magnificent utterance in chap. xx., “My Lord and my God.” Could all these be inventions of the apostle, or of some other writer unknown? Is not the evidence overwhelming that this could be none other than the Son of God?

CHAPTER XI.

ST. JOHN: THE SON OF GOD. THE SENT ONE—THE LAMB OF GOD.

THE SENT ONE.

THE one reason the Lord gives for all He says and does is that *He is sent of the Father*. The whole responsibility, therefore, of His words and actions travels back to Him that sent Him. This is true concerning the smallest minutiae of His life. He has never acted independently. He has never quoted a line of Scripture except under the conscious bidding of the Father and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This applies not merely to what this writer narrates, but to every utterance and to every act. Admit, for a moment, the possibility of inaccuracy, of mistaken application of an Old Testament Scripture, and where are we landed? Certainly in a far greater difficulty than that of accepting every statement of His as absolute truth, unmixed with imagination, fable or ignorance. Behind Him is God the Father; in Him is God the Holy Spirit; through Him is the revelation of the love and truth of God to all who will believe Him. He is the Word, who was God.

Two statements are made by the Apostle John in reference to His being the Sent One, one in iii. 17, "God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved"; the other in iii. 34, "For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." Here are two announcements: the *purpose* in His being sent, to save the world, and the *message* He delivers being the very words of God. This being so, the Lord constantly makes the appeal to faith in His message and in Himself. There is no ground for doubt or unbelief. Thus, in v. 24, "He that heareth My Word and believeth in Him that sent Me hath eternal life."

v. 38. "Whom He sent, Him ye believe not."

vi. 29. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent."

x. 36. "Say ye of Him Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?"

xi. 42. "Because of the people that stand by, I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

xvii. 21. "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

xvii. 23. "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me."

xvii. 25. "These have known that Thou hast sent Me."

Another declaration He makes is His absolute dependence on and submission to the Father.

iv. 34. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

v. 30. "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

vi. 38. "I am not come to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

vi. 57. "As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father."

vii. 16. "My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me."

ix. 4. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me."

xii. 49. "I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me; He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak:"

xii. 50. "Even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."

xiv. 10. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

In thus declaring the divine origin and authority of His words and works, He can appeal to the

Father for confirmation by testimony or witness-bearing. To this He refers in the following texts:

v. 36. "The works that the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me."

v. 37. "And the Father Himself that hath sent Me hath borne witness of Me."

viii. 18. "The Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me."

A further group of texts shows the unbroken communion between the Father and the Son:

vii. 18. "He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him."

vii. 28. "He that sent Me is true."

vii. 29. "I am from Him that sent Me."

vii. 33. "I go unto Him that sent Me."

viii. 16. "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me."

viii. 29. "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone."

After studying such a collection of statements, new force will be added to the closing words **xx. 21**, "As the Father hath sent Me, so SEND I YOU." Do we understand the position? Do we accept the equipment? Do we take up the work and the testimony, regardless of the consequences to ourselves?

Do we believe in the "presence," so that we can say, "I am not alone?"

To review the subject in a few words:

The Lord was upholding all things in creation by the word of His power, for by Him all things were consisting. He was the Master Workman (Prov. viii. 30, R. V.,) diligent, competent, responsible. But the time came when, at the Father's bidding, He should give up all work, with its glory and honour, and come in the likeness of man, to undertake an altogether different work—that of making atonement for sin.

For this He was set apart by the Father, and by Him filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of "sanctified," in John x. 6. No idea of unholiness is attached to the phrase; simply the idea of one set apart, fitted, filled, for the carrying out of a divine plan in and for the world, to accomplish which, He relinquished the position hitherto occupied.

When the work was about to be accomplished, He prayed, "Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." He prayed to be received back into the position originally occupied by Him. When He ascended, how superb the welcome back! how magnificent the acclamations of the unfallen heavenly hosts!

“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD.”

This statement of John the Baptist must have produced much thought and stirring expectation in the minds of pious and well-taught Jews. The use of the word *Lamb* would naturally turn their minds back to the occasions in their ceremonial law, when the lamb was to be offered in sacrifice. Each of these would suggest some phase of divine requirement met by divine command and provision, and used as such by faith. The great sentence falling from the preacher's lips would prove to be the answer, at last to the question of Isaac to his father Abraham, when going up to Mount Moriah, as found in Gen. xxii. 7, 8, “*Where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?*” To this Abraham had replied, “*God will provide Himself a lamb;*” and all down the centuries that Lamb of God's providing had been waited for, and watched for, by succeeding generations of believers. At length, the announcement rang out—*Behold! Look!* there is the Lamb of God—the Lamb predicted, foreshadowed, fore-ordained—who will take away the sin of the world. It was startling, astonishing! Who ever dreamt of the *world's* sin being taken away? This thought was the thought of God, higher than the highest Jewish expectation or dream. How the Baptist must have meditated upon the Scriptures that would suggest to his mind the work

and atonement of the Coming One! How he would group text with text, as, led by the Spirit, he was being prepared for his great mission.

Seven different occasions are found in which the lamb of old was used in sacrifice.

1. *The Passover Lamb*, Exod. xii.—This was the greatest fact in past Jewish history. It was the redemption of the nation from Egyptian bondage and degradation. Now has come the Lamb of God to redeem the world from sin's bondage, a far wider horizon line of blessing than Jews had dared to imagine.

2. *The Daily Burnt-offering Lamb*, Exod. xxix.—Morning and evening this sacrifice was offered, throughout the year. It would form the constant reminder of God's protection and watchfulness over His people, for whose welfare He had made Himself responsible. So again is suggested One who has come to be the watchful Saviour of His redeemed.

3. *The Peace-offering Lamb*, Lev. iii.—This sacrifice was a special illustration of communion. Jehovah's portion was first presented and offered on the altar. The remainder was partaken of by the priest and the offerer, and thus the whole was consumed in the presence of God. Christ is the meeting-place between God and the worshipper: "He is our Peace."

4. *The Sin-offering Lamb*, Lev. iv.—Under certain circumstances, a lamb was to be brought by the individual for his sin against God.

5. *The Trespass-offering Lamb*, Lev. v.—And in a similar way, for individual trespass, a lamb was to be offered, and thus expiation was made for sin. It is to Christ the individual sin must be confessed, day by day, that communion with God may be maintained. While the world's sin has been taken away, and in this is included the individual's sin, yet there is need for *daily* confession and dealing definitely with the Lord over special acts of sin.

6. *The Lamb for the cleansing of the Leper*, Lev. xiv.—In the ceremony for the cleansing of the leper, a lamb was to be offered as a sin-offering. This ceremony was one of restoration to place and position in the camp. The disease had attacked a man; he had been isolated; prayed for; cured probably by divine interposition, and then had to be ceremonially cleansed, and thus re-introduced to the congregation.

7. *The Wave-sheaf Lamb*, Lev. xxiii.—All the foregoing ceremonies have depicted death—the death of the lamb for sin. In this last ceremony, resurrection was set forth by the presentation of the first ripe sheaf of barley to God, the first fruits of the harvest. With it was offered the lamb for

the sin-offering, thus connecting death and resurrection.

Putting all these seven typical scenes together, there will be found a full expansion of "Behold the Lamb of God!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE CLOSING WEEK—THE CRUCIFIXION AND SUPERScription.

EACH Portrait of the Lord closes with the account of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. Without these stupendous facts, no blessing could come to a lost world. The *King* rejected must die on behalf of the nation that has spurned Him, in order that He hereafter may be able to assert His rights to rule, based on redemption.

The *Servant*, so patient, devoted, successful, winsome, must be removed by death, His ministry refused, His love rejected; but that He might the more effectually serve and save, for it is written, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." He will die as the ransom for all, and thus perform the most wonderful service.

The *Son of man*, compassionate, tender, faithful, sympathetic and at any one's disposal, must be rejected at the hands of man, who will prefer Barabbas the murderer to Jesus the Saviour, and He must die, that He may still "receive sinners and eat with them," and they hereafter be received by Him in His

own home and sit down redeemed and cleansed at His table.

The *Son of God* came from the bosom of the Father, the Word, who was God, who was the Lamb of God, and though revealing the glory of God in the grace of God, must bear the sin of the world, and be made the curse. He can only save by shedding His blood and giving His life a ransom. St. John records perhaps the most startling statement of His concerning His death, in the words of x. 17, 18, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received from My Father."

He died not as an example, not as a martyr, not having His life cut off by the hatred and malice of His foes; but because He laid it down for the sin of the world. All the elements of human hate and cruelty were there, brought to the surface by the opportunity afforded in His yielding Himself to the will of God and to the purpose that had been agreed upon before the world was.

He lived the life portrayed, *that He might die*. He died that He might forgive sin. He rose from the dead that He might be able to save. He ascended

that He might impart His victory, through the Holy Spirit, to all believers.

In this chapter, we shall seek to put clearly the order of the main events of the closing week, and then look into the different trials to which the Lord was subjected ere the final word was uttered, "LET HIM BE CRUCIFIED."

Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany (John xii. 1). As Passover fell upon the 14th of the month, this opening date would be the 8th Nisan. "There they made Him a supper." The place was the well-known house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and here the anointing took place, by Mary, that raised the storm of indignation as to the waste of money upon Him.

THE NEXT DAY WOULD BE SABBATH DAY—His last quiet day on earth, the lull before the tremendous storm that was about to burst upon Him. How that day was spent, and where, is unrecorded: whether He attended any synagogue service or not. Probably it was spent alone with God in the deep outpouring of His soul before the Father ere He went to finish that stupendous work that would secure the eternal Sabbath Day for His redeemed ones.

The 10th Nisan was the day of the Triumphal Entry, commemorated as Palm Sunday in Church

festivals. All four writers describe it: Matt. xxi. 1-11, Mark xi. 1-10, Luke xix. 29-40, John xii. 12-19. It was the only temporary gleam of sunshine, the one brief national recognition of His Messiahship, fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy, and so soon crushed by the stern attitude and the remorseless hatred of the Pharisees and the other leaders of national life. The day was full of incident, however: the desire of the Greeks to see Him, the Lord's utterances in connection therewith, the clear statement as to His approaching death, the Voice from heaven, sounding like a peal of thunder in the ears of the people.

The 11th Nisan found Him again in Jerusalem, the day opening with the withering of the fruitless fig-tree, Matt. xxi. 18-22, Mark xi. 12-14.

The 12th and 13th Nisan were the last two days of His public ministry, when He delivered the closing parables, and the solemn woes on the Pharisees. We cannot say how much can be apportioned to each of these days. The accounts are found in Matt. xxi.-xxv., Mark xi. 27-xiii., Luke xx., xxi. He farewelled the temple, never again to re-enter it (Matt. xxiii. 39), and gave the disciples, on the Mount of Olives, the foreview of the future of the city, temple and nation, concluding with the parables of Matt. xxv.

IT WAS PROBABLY ON THE MORNING of the 13th that He sent Peter and John into the city to make preparations for the Passover. In the evening, they all met, after 6 p. m., and ate the Passover Supper, thus conforming to the Old Testament regulations, that the supper was to be eaten *between the two evenings*, that is, according to Jewish reckoning, between 6 p. m. of the 13th and 6 p. m. of the 14th. The suggestion we make is that the Lord partook of Passover between 6 and 9 p. m. on the evening of the 13th, while the populace kept Passover Supper between 3 and 6 of the afternoon of the 14th. The details of this Passover Supper and subsequent discourses, together with the institution of the Lord's Supper, will be found in Matt. xxvi. 17-35, Mark xiv. 12-31, Luke xxii. 7-38, John xiii.-xvii.

About midnight, the Lord and the disciples arrived at Gethsemane, the agony and conflict took place, the betrayal by Judas and the arrest, between probably the hours of 12 and 3 a. m., Matt. xxvi. 36-56, Mark xiv. 32-52, Luke xxii. 39-53, John xviii. 1-12.

THE TRIALS.—*How often, and before what tribunals was the Lord tried?*

I. BEFORE ANNAS, John xviii. 13. No details are given of what transpired then. It was probably very short and hurried, for Annas at once sent Him on to Caiaphas, the acting High Priest.

2. BEFORE CAIAPHAS, Matt. xxvi. 57-75; Mark xiv. 55-75; Luke xxii. 54-62. During this trial occurred Peter's denial in the courtyard, and the scourging on the face with rods in the High Priest's palace. This was the fulfilment of Isaiah lii. 14, "His visage was more marred than any man's." At this trial, the witnesses appeared with their false testimony, in which no two agreed, and then came the adjuration by the High Priest as to His being the Son of God. On His declaration that He was, the smiting and scourging followed, as before mentioned. Thus the second trial ended, which was in preparation for the appearing of the prisoner before the Sanhedrim.

3. BEFORE THE COUNCIL, OR SANHEDRIM, Luke xxii. 66-71. Shortly before 6 a. m., the Lord was taken before the Council, over which Caiaphas, as High Priest, presided. This accounts for a repetition of some of the questions and answers. Only St. Luke gives the account of this trial. The object aimed at was gained, namely, an accusation of blasphemy for saying He was the Son of God, with which to take Him before Pilate, the Roman governor, and so secure His condemnation.

4. BEFORE PILATE, John xviii. 28-32. This writer gives us the account of the first appearance before Pilate, and tells how the accusation failed,

and the termination of the trial by the order, "Take ye Him and judge Him according to your law." He perceived at once that the accusation was religious and not political. Therefore he had no jurisdiction, and was evidently glad to get rid of the case so summarily.

5. BEFORE PILATE a second time, John xviii. 33-38; Matt. xxvii. 11-14; Mark xv. 1-5; Luke xxiii. 1-4. "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall *again*, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, 'Art Thou the king of the Jews?'" The conclusion of this trial was the verdict, "I find no fault in this man," Luke xxiii. 4. At this point, the fury increased tenfold, and in the fierce rage, the accusers mentioned the word Galilee: "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." Again the Jewish party was foiled. Nothing in contravention of Roman law had been brought forward, nothing proved, and Pilate, glad to get the case clear of his court, sent Him to Herod, the king of Galilee, who was then in Jerusalem.

6. BEFORE HEROD, Luke xxiii. 7-12. This part of the proceedings is noticed only by this writer, and he gives us very few details. In fact, little could have been said. He was questioned severely, but not an answer could be extracted from Him. Wit-

nesses there were none; chief priests and scribes vehemently accused Him; but through it all, nothing was proved. In vain did they seek for some word from His own lips which might incriminate Him. Mockery and insult were heaped upon the silent sufferer; dumb He must be, if any are to be saved; speech will clear Him, but cannot clear sinners. So "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers, He opened not His mouth." The verdict at the end of this trial was, "Nothing worthy of death is done unto Him." Again all the charges have failed, and the case is thrown once more on Pilate.

7. BEFORE PILATE for the third time, Matt. xxvii. 16-21; Mark xv. 6-14; Luke xxiii. 13-18; John xix. 1-8. Again the case is re-opened, and Pilate has recourse to the custom of releasing a prisoner at the Passover feast, hoping in this way to get rid of the difficulty he is in. He knows perfectly well that there is nothing whatever that can be fairly dealt with under Roman law. Yet he knows equally well that an acquittal will render him so thoroughly unpopular as to threaten the retaining of his position under the Emperor of Rome. He will do anything he can to conciliate the roused populace, and yet he wants to save his prisoner from the fury of the nation.

The suggestion Pilate made again failed to accomplish the purpose desired, and this seventh trial ended with the cry, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" At this stage, a most iniquitous and inhuman order was given. Coupled with the release of Barabbas was the order to scourge Jesus. This was the infliction of thirty-nine lashes, by two Roman soldiers, on the bare back, with thongs of leather, into which sharp bits of brass or other metal were interwoven. The crowning with thorns was added to this awful punishment; the blindfolding and the striking with rods, accompanied by all the vile insult that hard-hearted heathen soldiers could invent; and yet the end had not quite come. No sentence had been delivered by the tribunal, no accusation had been proved. Pilate held his hand, not knowing what turn events might take, and most probably secretly hoping that the awful scourging and accompanying treatment would satisfy the malicious hunger of the people. But it could not thus be.

8. BEFORE PILATE for the fourth time. In John xix. 8, 9, we read, "When Pilate therefore heard that saying ('He made Himself the Son of God'), he was the more afraid, and *went again* into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou?" He is compelled once more to re-open the trial, and almost succeeds in delivering Him, for verse 12 tells

us, "From thenceforth, Pilate sought to release Him."

But a new cry is started—no longer a religious one, but a *political* one—"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," and "We have no king but Cæsar." The claim to kingship that is brought up, and the apparently new ground for investigation and action, brings matters to a climax. Pilate trembles for his position, and without much delay gives the final verdict, "Let Him be crucified."

A careful study of the different accusations and pleas brought forward will bring out very strongly the hatred and deceit of the human heart in its antagonism to God. It is "desperately wicked," and nowhere is this more manifest than at the Cross. Yet

"The love of God is stronger
Than the measure of man's mind."

Through it all, and above it all, towered that stupendous love that made atonement for the very sins that were being committed in the sentencing of Jesus to the cross.

Sin, Satan, Death press near
To harass, and appall;
Let but my bleeding Lord appear
Backward they go and fall.
He hell, in hell, laid low,
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death, by dying, slew.

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain.
Slain by Divine decree;
Who lived, who died, who lives again
For thee, His saint, for thee.

And all down the centuries has rung the great song that shall ring on for eternity, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ."

THE SUPERScription.

Not one of the four evangelists gives the full text of the Superscription. The Roman custom was to nail over the head of the executed criminal his name and crime, so that all spectators might see who, and what, he was.

Bearing in mind what has been said, in previous chapters, as to the *reasons* for each gospel being written, we may trace a further confirmation in the wording of this part of the story of the Cross.

ST. MATTHEW calls this *His accusation* (xxvii. 37), and states it, "*This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.*" His was the gospel for Jews, and the gospel of the *kingdom* specially. He has given the story of the birth, the heralding, the attack, His teaching the laws of the kingdom, proving His power as King, the official rejection as King and denunciation as a blasphemer. Naturally, the accusation will be that of claiming to be the King of the Jews, for which

He is suffering the death penalty under the sentence of the Roman government.

ST. MARK writes of "*The superscription of His accusation*" (xv. 26) thus, "*The King of the Jews.*" He has portrayed the Servant of Jehovah, working through that strenuous short period, healing, helping, saving, teaching, praying and loving. And now over the cross stands the simple truth in the shortest phrase, which has been made the reason for the cutting short of that life of strange usefulness and service. The Servant of God is condemned for declaring what He is, though He has never claimed the position of King, for He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

ST. LUKE uses the expression "*A superscription*" (xxiii. 35), and phrases it "*This is the King of the Jews.*" It is written over the head of the wondrous Man, the Prophet and Teacher, the man of quenchless sympathy and tireless love. The only descendant from David that could prove His right to the title and position, He has used His opportunity to be the Man amongst men, saving many and bringing them nearer to God. It has not been the aim and purpose of His life to be crowned as King of the Jews; quite the contrary. It is a superscription.

ST. JOHN gives us another variation, and calls it "*A title*" (xix. 19), and describes it thus, "*Jesus of*

Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” He has written to declare that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God; he therefore carefully preserves the term of humiliation and reproach—“of Nazareth,”—and connects it with the accusation, and defines carefully the Person accused.

The FULL sentence probably was, “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” The name in full and the crime in full, written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. These three languages would convey to three distinct classes the great fact that God would have the world know concerning Jesus.

Hebrew would attract the notice of the educated religious section of the concourse then present: they shall read in the language of their sacred Scriptures the sacred Name and the solemn fact that they have all along denied.

Greek was the spoken language of the market and the common people. They shall read, then, in their everyday tongue, the superscription over that bowed head.

Latin was the language of the government of Rome, and the governing powers shall know who, and what, He is who hangs upon the tree of curse.

In this unexpected manner, then, is proclaimed to the world the truth of John iii. 16: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

I HEAR TEN THOUSAND VOICES.

I hear ten thousand voices singing
Their praises to the Lord most high;
Far distant shores and hills are ringing
With anthems of their nations' joy,—
"Praise ye the Lord! for He has given
To lands in darkness hid His light,
As morning rays light up the heaven,
His Word has chased away our night."

On China's shores I hear His praises
From lips that once kissed idol stones;
Soon as His banner He upraises,
The Spirit moves the breathless bones:
"Speed, speed Thy Word o'er land and ocean,
The Lord in triumph has gone forth;
The nations hear with strange emotion,
From East to West, from South to North."

The song has sounded o'er the waters,
And India's plains re-echo joy;
Beneath the moon sit India's daughters
Soft singing as the wheel they ply;
"Thanks to Thee Lord, for hopes of glory,
The peace on earth to us revealed;
Our cherished idols fall before Thee,
Thy Spirit has our pardon sealed."

On Afric's sunny shore, glad voices
Wake up the morn of Jubilee;
The negro, once a slave, rejoices,
Who's freed by Christ, is doubly free.
"Sing, Brothers, sing! yet many a nation
Shall hear the voice of God and live;
E'en we are heralds of salvation,
The Word He gave we'll freely give."

The Closing Week.

Fair are New Zealand's wooded mountains,
Deep glens, blue lakes, and dizzy steeps;
But sweeter than the murmuring fountains
Rises the song from holy lips;
"By blood did Jesus come to save us,
So deeply stained with brothers' blood;
Our hearts we'll give to Him who gave us
Deliverance from the fiery flood."

O'er prairies wild, the song is spreading,
Where once the war-cry sounded long;
But now the evening sun is shedding
His rays upon a praying throng.
"Lord of all worlds, Eternal Spirit!
Thy light upon our darkness shed;
For Thy dear love, for Jesus' merit,
From joyful hearts be worship paid."

Hark! Hark! a louder sound is booming
O'er heaven and earth, o'er land and sea;
The angel's trump proclaims His coming—
Our day of endless jubilee:
"Hail to Thee Lord! Thy people praise Thee;
In every land Thy name we sing;
On heaven's eternal throne upraise Thee,
Take Thou Thy power Thou glorious King."

H. W. Fox.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.

THE RESURRECTION.

THERE is no day in the year like Easter Sunday, for joyfulness, hope, and a strong sense of "life abundantly." The Lord risen is the Lord triumphant, ascended, and returning to accomplish the purpose of God in this world. When a loved one dies, how keen is the sense of loss; those lips never again to speak their words of love and sympathy! that mind no more to plan and execute schemes of help and blessing to others! Now all that has been said and done has come to an end, and by degrees the old words lose their power, and the promises made can never be fulfilled.

Such was the awful blank made in the lives of the disciples when the Lord Jesus died, and they had no hesitation in voicing the utter hopelessness of their hearts. "We had hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel." What, then, was the Resurrection but the raising of all their hopes, of all His words, of all the promises He had ever uttered. Nothing He had said is lost—all is raised up with Him, and possesses a new force in consequence.

There is no more interesting study than the events in connection with the resurrection, and their historical order.

HOW DOES HE APPEAR, AND TO WHOM.

First. TO MARY MAGDALENE, in the garden by Calvary. It would appear that very early in the morning, she, with several other women, had gone to the sepulchre for the purpose of further anointing the body. On arrival, they found the stone rolled away, and the tomb empty, and the angelic guard in possession, who announced the resurrection, and gave them directions to hasten back and inform the disciples. Mary Magdalene must have hurried alone to the house of Peter and John, who immediately ran to see for themselves, and found it to be as she had said.

On their retiring, she had remained still puzzled, with streaming eyes, gazing into the tomb. Life for her without her Lord was hardly worth living. The dead body would bring her a measure of relief, could she but know where to find it. Then came the sudden, beautiful, unexpected revelation of the risen Lord, for the moment mistaken, by her, for the gardener. Tears were dried, love sprang up into a holy flame—and she was the first evangelist of the new hope, the forerunner of the risen Lord, commissioned by His own lips to announce the great

fact. All the words that had been heard from His lips are alive again. His "Come unto Me," "Neither do I condemn thee," "None shall pluck them out of My hand," are instinct with meaning and power. She had called Him by His name of Lord; she had believed that God had raised Him from the dead, and she was *saved*—from her sorrow, gloom, difficulty, loneliness and everything else. Rom. x. 9 had its first illustration, "If thou shalt confess, with thy mouth, Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Second. To the OTHER WOMEN, who, in the meantime, had gone on their way to seek the other disciples, specially the apostles, to convey to them the message, does He appear. On the road, the Lord met them with the "All hail" (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10), and gave them the charge to go and remind the disciples, whom He calls "My brethren," of the appointment to meet Him in Galilee on a certain day He had previously fixed. There seems no doubt but that, by reminding them of the words He had spoken in their hearing many times, He hoped to kindle their faith in the literal interpretation of His promise, "On the third day I shall rise again." But the women's words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. The most precious

truth for the times, namely, the resurrection, was misunderstood by the disciples, explained away, and so became powerless to effect in their hearts the very revival they were so sorely needing. Is there any parallel to the attitude of disciples today towards the truth most needed, namely, the promise of the return of the Lord personally? Is not this just as much misunderstood, and unexpected, and treated as an idle tale?

Third. To SIMON PETER. The apostle Paul, in I. Cor. xv. 5, states that "the Lord appeared to Simon." This is referred to in Luke xxiv. 34. When, where and how, we have no record. *Why?* His failure in the denial of his Master, followed by the melting look of love from that Master, had created a deeper need in his soul than in that of any other disciple. For him, the Lord has the most affectionate longing; He must seek him out to comfort him, reassure him, remove all sense of guilt, impart the results of the atonement now accomplished, namely, the remission of sins. The most needy one shall hear the first message; hence the broken heart is the first to be bound up, and the tears of repentance and bitter remorse shall be the first to be wiped away.

Fourth. In the evening of this wondrous day, the TWO DISCIPLES, who had spent the day in Jerusalem,

were wending their way home to Emmaus. They had come, hoping against hope, for comfort, light and cheer amid the awful depression produced by the events of Calvary. But they were filled with sadness on account of the strange and contradictory rumours that were in circulation. The brethren, as a body, were certain the Lord could not have been raised from the dead. None of them had seen Him—yet the grave was empty; the women had been there and found it so, and had added that they had seen and spoken with angels, who affirmed that He was alive. The state of the grave-clothes, undisturbed in their folds, went to prove that no human hand had taken away the body, otherwise the grave-clothes would have disappeared also, or at least been left in disorder. So fully had the idea taken possession of them that He could not rise from the dead, that the proofs that He had done so were powerless to convince them. Such is the blinding power of unbelief; it makes men irrational and illogical, when they think that they are particularly clear in their reasoning faculties and their logical conclusions. While in this state, the Lord drew near and joined in their conversation, spending the time in expounding to them, from the Old Testament Scriptures, the things concerning Himself. Thus the *written* Word prepared the way for the

living Word. It was the evening meal, in the breaking of bread, that He revealed Himself to their wondering gaze. They opened their home; He opened the Scriptures, then their understandings, and then their eyes, so that they returned, the same evening, to the upper room meeting to announce that He was risen from the dead.

Fifth. TO THE COMPANY IN THE UPPER ROOM, when a number (not only the ten apostles) were met together, most of them still in doubt, and discussing the question of the resurrection, the Lord suddenly appeared with the gracious salutation, "*Peace be unto you,*" followed by the invitation to handle Him, and see whether He were not indeed the crucified Lord. Compare the two accounts given in Luke xxiv. 36-40 and John xx. 19-23, for all the details of this scene. The first declaration of peace was in connection with the cross, and all that the cross had accomplished for them. The second declaration of peace was followed by the words, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost,*" and the commission to be sent into the world by the Lord, as He had been sent by the Father.

The life of the Sent One, with its utter self-negation, surrender to God, dependence on God for the words to speak, work to do, guidance in all details, and with the great equipment of the infilling and

indwelling of the Holy Spirit, had been before them. They are now to be launched out in the same work, with the same divine power and fitness, to live a similar life of utter self-effacement, to the glory of God.

On this blessed Easter day, then, He has appeared to one, to two, to many. He has revealed Himself in a garden, by the roadside, in a private house, at a meeting of disciples. He has come in exquisite grace and tenderness to a sorrowing, lonely, broken-hearted one, full of love to Him for what He has done for her, when, finding her in the awful power of the enemy, He had delivered her from Satanic power, and how "He satisfies the longing soul."

Had He not said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them?" And now, as He sees the women hastening to announce Him to the brethren, He joins them, and appears to them, thus fulfilling His promise. Similarly, in the Emmaus home, as those heads were bowed, and thanks were given to God for the food before them, and those hearts had been fired by His own matchless exposition of Scripture, were they not met together in His Name, though unbelief had clouded the vision, and doubt had prevented full recognition? Still His promise held good. *He is there*, and the revelation that burst upon them filled them with joy unspeakable.

Or again, is there a heart overweighted by sin and failure, broken down under an awful sense of hopeless despair, and stricken by the silence of Calvary? He, the risen One, will seek him out, and will manifest to him, first of all of the band of men, the triumph over sin and guilt and shame, and give to Simon Peter the kiss of reconciliation. It is the secret welcome of love to a repenting but loving disciple.

And lastly, as they gather in that most sacred spot, the upper room, where He had last met them and given them those exquisitely tender words recorded in John xiv., xv. and xvi., He takes His accustomed place, presides over their meeting, begins it with the benediction, and continues it as a blessed experience meeting for all, and any, who will touch Him with the finger of faith.

Such is the picture of the risen Lord, and He is the same yesterday, today and for ever. Expect to meet Him by the roadside, in the garden, at the supper-table, in the home, in the assembly of the people of God, or when bowed down under an oppressive sense of failure and sin. He comes. He appears—the victor over your sin, the comforter in your sorrow, the only satisfaction for a lonely, loving heart, to make glad and strong, to baptize in the Holy Ghost, and to commission for work in the

world. Expect Him, and He will appear. He is the Lord of gladness, the Giver of joy, and the Restorer of life to all.

Sixth. To the SAME COMPANY WITH THOMAS. "But Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came" (John xx. 24). During the week ushered in by Easter Sunday, the events of that evening meeting had been made known to Thomas. Glowing with hope and love, some of them had probably described the whole scene, telling of the sudden quiet appearing, the salutation of benediction, the offer for any of them to handle Him and see that it was truly Himself, and the showing of His hands and feet, pierced by the nails. All had been unbelieving up to that evening meeting; now Thomas, possibly not more unbelieving than the rest, and certainly quite as affectionate, feels hardly able as yet to believe the wondrous news. He longs to do so, but he needs proof as fully corroborative as they had had, and says so, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." He asks for the same tests as they have had for the confirmation of the fact, so intensely important and almost impossible. Thomas fears any deception, any raising of hopes to be dashed to the

ground again, as already his had been. Strong in his love and devotion to his Lord, he cannot bear the thought of any possible mistake; hence his attitude toward the announcement.

Maybe he has been a little unfairly held up as an example of great unbelief and doubt. In reality, he was not more so than any of his companions. So, on the following Sunday evening, when in the same upper room, they were met together, and Thomas was with them, the gracious Lord appeared on the scene, and immediately offered to him the same opportunity of testing the reality of the resurrection as had been accorded to the others—"Reach hither thy finger and see my hands," etc. It was the gracious act of the Master to meet a disciple's difficulty. Then came the most magnificent declaration recorded from the lips of a disciple that week, "My Lord and my God." This was the utterance of abandonment of life to Christ as God, the domination over him, not of love only, but of life and power. So complete, unique and splendid has been the victory over death and the grave, that heaven has opened over his soul, and he is bathed in the sunshine of the face of God. A risen Christ has for ever chased away all the clouds of doubt and gloom.

The seventh appearing recorded is found in John xxi. 1-14, and must be taken in connection with

some verses in Matthew's gospel. In chapter xxvi. 32, the Lord, while going up the Mount of Olives, after the Passover Supper, said to the disciples, "After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." Evidently, He had made an appointment with a large number of the believing men in Galilee to meet Him on a certain day, in a certain place. They would have had no idea of the events to transpire in Jerusalem, for only to the inner company of disciples had the Lord announced His approaching death and resurrection. To these country disciples it would, therefore, be a simple arrangement for another visit to be paid by their Lord some weeks hence. Reminding the eleven of this, in order to stay their hearts in the approaching hours of awful darkness and death, He wended His way to Gethsemane. On the Easter Sunday morning, the angels bid the women at the tomb go and tell the disciples, "He is risen from the dead, lo! He *goeth before you into Galilee.*" It was a gracious message to rekindle faith in Him by reminding them of the appointment (Matt. xxviii. 7). This was further confirmed by the Lord Himself, Who, meeting the women on the way, said to them, "Go, tell My brethren that *they depart into Galilee*; there shall they see me" (xxviii. 10). Strange how powerless were the words to quicken faith and rekindle hope.

“Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” The Lord had made most beautiful arrangements to keep faith alive. Alas! that unbelief should win the day.

In John xxi. is the beginning of the story that tells of the keeping of the appointment by the disciples. Seven of them have gone north to await Him, and be at the meeting convened, and have arrived at the shore of the lake over night. How shall they spend the interval? Very naturally, Peter suggests a turn at the old boat and a night's fishing. Was it an act of declension? Did it indicate any impatience or lack of love and obedience? Thinking of the circumstances, what more simple than thus to spend the time. The ready acquiescence of the others, some of whom were not fishermen, points rather to this view of occupying themselves till morning, than to an idea of declension of heart, as has so often been asserted. True, they caught nothing; but what of the conversation of those seven men through the night? Would not Nathaniel and Thomas have much to talk over, and may not the night have been, after all, well spent for spiritual edification, a far more important purpose than catching fish? If *success* only means proof of being in the right place, there have been many more serious times than this.

In the morning early, on the beach, stands the figure, but dimly perceived in the haze, of the risen Lord hailing them in the boat, asking after their welfare, taking an interest in the passing occupation of the hour, and lovingly enquiring about them, with an additional suggestion to gladden their hearts with success in their work, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." It was the Lord entering into their pursuits for the time being, and utilizing them for His gracious purposes, for He wants a big haul of fish, and He finds the men ready for the work and delighted to be of service. Then came the unveiling of the unknown form, "*It is the Lord.*" Little they expected Him to be round there so early and watching them so keenly; nay, more, He has foreseen their needs, got the fire lighted on the shore, the bread and fish are cooked for them, and now He invites them, hungry, yet cheery, to "Come and breakfast." He is the servant still, waiting on His disciples, loving them, caring for them, and stooping in infinite compassion to give them a hearty meal. So they have a preliminary meeting with Him, full of delight and joy; and then, at His bidding, the fish caught are gathered up and counted, for they will be wanted that day.

Eighth. TO THE FIVE HUNDRED MEN. Is it not the day for the great convention of men only, arranged

so many weeks ago? and has not the foresight of the Lord provided for the commissariat? "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth we are but dust." No record is given of the great meeting, save the one line in 1 Cor. xv. 6, "He appeared to five hundred brethren at once." Imagine the scene. A great gathering of eager, expectant men from all over the country, some of whom have heard the strange tidings of the Passover events in Jerusalem; how there had been the execution of three supposed criminals on Calvary by the Roman governor, one of whom was their beloved Master. Some of them, too, had been up for the Passover feast, and had seen it all, hardly able to believe their eyes—not a voice or hand raised on His behalf—and yet, He had made an appointment to meet them all on that special day.

Was He really coming? Was He alive? Had He triumphed? What did it all mean? Keen expectation, intense excitement were there, and then, in twos and threes, or tens and twenties, they gather together. Can you see any of them? There come up the hill the sick of the palsy that was, and his four bearers; just behind, the young man from Nain and his little party of bearers; yonder, the two men from Gadara, rejoicing in God; the Samaritan leper, who has never let that loud voice of his

get quiet; Bartimeus and Zaccheus from Jericho; the man whose right hand had been withered; the demoniac in the synagogue, who had disturbed the service; the leper from the hillside; the nobleman and his son from Cana of Galilee; some of the Samaritans probably who had met Him after the memorable interview of John iv.; then from Jerusalem there may have been the impotent man from the Pool of Bethesda, the blind man of the Pool of Siloam, Lazarus of Bethany, Nicodemus, and Councillor Joseph; in short, a splendid gathering of men who have been partakers of His blessing in past year, *all trophies of His grace*, now summoned to a meeting where they may see His face and together hear His voice for *the last time on earth*.

And what will be the topic of the day's convention? Surely the purpose in the Lord's mind must have been that He Himself should explain to this great company the MEANING OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION, AND THE ADVENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. To none, apparently, had He disclosed the great fact and purpose of the Atonement. All that He had passed through appeared to be but Jewish hate, malice and rejection, now so wonderfully counteracted by the resurrection. But to these believers might it not have been a blessed purpose and a neces-

sary thing for Him to meet them and declare the unsearchable riches of His grace. How every eye would be riveted on Him! How every word would tell! How strange for them to hear of the forgiveness of sins, of the gospel of remission of sins for all, of the great thoughts of God in redemption. How grandly must the cross have shone out before their eyes, and how superb now to faith the marred form, the thorn-crowned brow, the pierced hands and feet of Emmanuel. The whole scene must have been one of surpassing power, tenderness and interest. The great farewell is taken by the Master of His disciples, and the meeting dissolves. Back over the hills stream the crowds of men, fast breaking up into knots of twos and threes as they turn hither and thither on their homeward way. How will they describe the convention? What will be the report? Startling to opponents and enemies, the news that He Whom they thought dead is indeed alive and all-powerful! Thus it is suggested the plans were laid for the reception of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the subsequent spread of the Truth, and the formation of the Church of God.

Ninth. ONE MORE APPEARING is recorded, namely, "*He was seen of James*" (1 Cor. xv. 7). How, or when, nothing is said.

Tenth. And then came the closing scene, when

He led the apostles out as far as Bethany, and while blessing them, was parted from them. How that last walk will live in their memories! No eye saw Him but theirs, no passer-by mingled with the little group. It was a time of perfect, undisturbed quiet, and the climax, no doubt, wholly unexpected. The holy voice giving them the last words of gracious benediction, the form ascending from their midst and soon lost to view, as a cloud hid Him from their sight. Will they never hear Him again, or see Him again? It is not death that has severed Him from them now, but *Life, LIFE ABUNDANT, TRIUMPHANT and GLORIOUS*—Life to be poured forth in new forms and under new conditions; Life to be communicable to a multitude throughout the world, when the Holy Spirit shall have come.

Such are, in brief, the stories of the appearances of the risen Lord. We wait for the great and next appearing, when He will summon a great host to meet Him. The mountain in Galilee was one place of meeting, *the air* will be the next appointment. The whole Church will be there, trophies of His mighty grace and power gathered from all nations and climes. Lepers, blind, lame, deaf, dumb, demon-possessed, all delivered by Him—all having received the remission of sins; and the topic, the unfolding of the purposes of God through the Lord

Jesus in the coming glory. Great things are yet to come out of the atonement, great triumphs will lie in the future, and the Church of God, redeemed and Spirit-filled, is to be the executive force through whom these glories will be achieved.

THE ASCENSION.

Of the Ascension, St. Matthew makes no mention at all. He closes his narrative with the personal promise of the presence, "Lo, I am with you always." Though ascended, yet here in the power and authority of the Throne.

St. Mark tells us "He was *received* up into heaven" (xvi. 19),—a strong contrast to the words of John i. 11, "He came unto His own, and His own *received Him not.*" But he is to be received now on earth by faith into the hearts of believers as the ascended Lord, that they may become the Sons of God. "As many as *received Him*, to them gave He authority to become sons of God" (John i. 12).

St. Luke says, "He was carried up into heaven" (xxiv. 51), and in his second account, in Acts i. 9, "He was *taken* up." The weeping Mary asked the gardener where he had *borne* the dead body, and the apostle Peter spoke, on the day of Pentecost, of those wicked hands that had *taken* and slain Him. Now heaven has reversed earth's verdict, and

throughout the narrative there is impressed on the mind, first, the absolute dependence and obedience of the Son, though the risen Lord; and, secondly, the action of heaven versus the treatment on earth. The Son of God waited till He was sent for and carried up into heaven. He was raised up; He was taken up.

We, too, wait till we are sent for, to be carried by the angels into the Lord's presence, or to be translated by His sovereign power and will and by the shout of His call.

St. John makes no mention of the ascension, but quotes the many allusions to it that fell from our Lord's lips, such as vi. 62; vii. 33, 34, 39; viii. 14, 21; xii. 26; xiv. 2, 12, 19, 28; xvi. 5, 7, 28; xx. 17.

He has gone; but He is to return, and to return by the way He went.

THE SECOND ADVENT

is the hope of the Church and the pledge of the blessing to the world. How do the four writers impress this fact upon their readers? What are the prominent features of the Lord's testimony concerning it?

St. Matthew, writing from the standpoint of the kingdom, gives us the parable in which the Marriage of the King's Son is referred to, and follows it with

the parable of chap. xxv., containing the words, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," continuing the report of the Lord's utterances till He reaches the climax, "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." The exhortation based upon the statement is, Be watchful, Be ready, Have oil, He is coming to execute law, and govern in power.

St. Mark, in chap. xiii. 35, specially emphasizes the phase of His coming as a Master returning to His household. In this passage only do we find the allusion to the four night watches, in any one of which the Master may appear. It is one of those apparently simple statements that expands into great vistas of truth. The mention of the night-watches suggests a night time as the interval between the disappearance and reappearance of the Lord. In the night time work must be done by lamplight; hence the force of His words: "Ye are the light of the world"; "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be ye as men that wait for their Lord." When the sun rises night vanishes, and lamps vanish and the whole world is bathed in light.

The division of the night into four watches—called Evening, Midnight, Cock-crowing, Morning—suggests the enquiry, Does history supply any in-

formation up to the present time bearing out this division? The answer is that there are the clearest historical confirmations of such a division.

When the Lord had died and gone from the sight of the world, the Holy Spirit descended after the Ascension, and kindled the lamps of the 120 disciples in the upper room, adding, by the evening of that day, 3,000 more. The events of Pentecost mark the first appointment of the Evening Watch of the Church. From that hour she began to watch for her returning Lord. The Apostle Peter refers to it in Acts iii. Later on the Apostle Paul preached it, and wrote his first two epistles specially on the subject, namely, 1st and 2d Thessalonians.

How soon the dark shadows of night fell, in dissension, persecution, faction, division! The apostles in their later writings give many hints of the darkening of the times. The early centuries passed on, and the Church all unconsciously passed from the evening watch into the Midnight Watch, better known in history as "The Dark Ages." The Papal power rose to its height then, and boasted of having quenched all the light of Protestantism. Truly the lamps were hidden, if not extinguished. It was the period of gross darkness that covered all the people.

Suddenly was heard the shrill "cock-crowing" of Martin Luther that awoke all Europe, and led to

the retrimming and relighting many lamps, and kindling such a light as has never since been extinguished.

Yet the Master came not in the first, second, or third watch. By this we know we are in the "Morning Watch," and are hereby exhorted all the more earnestly to be Waiting, Watching, Working, Witnessing, Warring.

St. Luke, in chap. xix. 11-27, gives us the parable of the Pounds, in which the Lord represents Himself as coming back to a kingdom, having previously given to His servants their instructions as to occupying with His business left to them. In the parable the main thought is, Position in the administration of the affairs of the future kingdom in proportion to faithfulness in service with what was entrusted to the servants. Diligence and faithfulness will be the keywords to the lesson here. Watchfulness is not to be idleness, nor theorizing about the coming, but the practical application of all one's powers in useful aggressive work for the absent Lord, according to His revealed will.

In St. John's Gospel very little definite mention is made of this subject. In chap. xiv. 3 the Lord says, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." It is the thought of a Friend coming

to meet and welcome friends as His guests, the future sharers of His home and estate.

PUTTING ALL THE DIFFERENT IDEAS TOGETHER we have a returning Sovereign to take charge of a kingdom; a glorious Person—a Bridegroom to claim and receive His Bride; an Employer of servants to look into and reward faithfulness by promotion to a very much higher sphere of service; a Householder returning to His house; a Friend entertaining and welcoming His friends.

Throughout Scripture much more will be found concerning the Lord's Return, but all may be grouped under these different heads, as given us in these four Gospels.

“Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know if he shall be manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is” (1 John iii. 2).

CHRIST RETURNETH.

It may be at morn when the day is awaking,
When sunlight through darkness and shadow is breaking,
That Jesus will come in the fulness of glory,
To receive from the world “His own.”

O Lord Jesus how long, how long,
Ere we shout the glad song,
Christ returneth, Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Amen.

It may be at midnight, it may be at twilight,
It may be, perchance, that the blackness of midnight
Will burst into light, in the blaze of His glory,
When Jesus receives "His own."

While hosts cry Hosanna, from heaven descending,
With glorified saints and the angels attending,
With grace on His brow like a halo of glory,
Will Jesus receive "His own."

Oh joy! Oh delight! should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying,
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord in the glory,
When Jesus receives "His own."

H. L. TURNER.

APPENDIX

What is the True Explanation of the Death of Christ?

A great change has come over the habits of thought and expression in recent years, with regard to the evangelistic presentation of the Death of Christ. Many phrases, that were current coin at one time are seldom, if ever, heard now. The trend has been, and is, to deny, if not purposely to omit, the doctrine of the Atonement, that is the sacrifice of Christ for sin. This change may partly be accounted for by objection to the phraseology of some popular hymns concerning the death and blood of Christ. In these days of keen criticism and close examination of statements, certain of these phrases have necessarily and fairly come under close scrutiny, and have been pronounced untrue, coarse, misleading, and highly objectionable. This need create no surprise. It should, however, lead to all the closer enquiry as to what the Scripture actually does say, and not as to how hymn-writers describe these facts.

One of the objections most frequently raised is to the statement that "the innocent suffered for the guilty." This is a very fair objection, inasmuch as there is no such statement to be found in Scripture. The association with the word "innocent" is that of ignorance. We speak of an innocent child, and we mean that the child has had no opportunity of contact with evil knowledge, and has a mind pure in consequence. But such is not the fact when we have to

describe the Son of God. He was pure and holy, but was fully aware of the whole awful condition of sin in which the world was, and which was infecting and destroying every human being. His was not the innocence of ignorance, but the purity of God. Therefore, the word "just" is the word used to describe Him. "He died the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." The word "just" implies a righteous mind, perfectly aware of the full existence of sin, but uncontaminated by it. Hence the objection falls to the ground that is raised against the "innocent suffering for the guilty." If He suffers with the full consciousness of all it would involve Him in, and with the full consent of His will, and by the fixed purpose of His own heart, no objection can be raised on the ground of fairness, or legality, or morality.

The usual view-point of the death of Christ is in reference to the provision for human need and to the salvation that is thus supplied. Let us, however, try and change the view-point altogether, and get the profound mystery of the Cross into another, and possibly a truer perspective.

Let us imagine ourselves as spectators of the whole drama from a point of view remote from this world, and without having any personal relationship to the results of it. In the far-distant past, then, we see the commencement of the great work of Creation, when gradually the whole universe came into being under the Divine fiat, and under the control of the Son of God, who is called the "WORD," and who is spoken of "as upholding all things by the word of His power." From the hand of God has sprung a perfect creation. A perfect Creator must have a perfect Law for the true government of His Universe. A perfect Law must have a perfect Administration for its protective policy, and equally for its punitive policy, should

any rebellion ever occur. A perfect Law must also have a perfect Penalty for its infraction. Such a government, with such perfection of law and executive, can have no room for mercy, in the case of any law-breakers. It can only fully carry out its own perfect policy, both in protection and punishment. Any mere manifestation of mercy would be illegal, and therefore subversive of government. It would offer a premium to rebellion. Hence any manifestation of mercy must be strictly legal, and can only be possible after there shall have been the full and righteous settlement of all the law's claims against law-breakers. Human justice must always be imperfect. Human law must have many loopholes for escape. No human administration dare carry out law strictly as law, but must give chances, and be pitiful to those who are arrested and arraigned before it. But this is impossible with Divine law. The Throne of God is established on Judgment and Justice. Righteousness is the foundation of that throne. Therefore, the administration of its government must be absolutely above suspicion of mere pity.

In the due course of the Divine will and purpose, the creation of man occurred, under the terms of Genesis 1:26, 27. God said: "Let us make man in our image after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." In the book entitled "The Crises of the Christ," by Dr. Campbell Morgan, this statement has received very careful and helpful treatment. He explains how the word "image" means shadow, profile, and that there is not in the word the suggestion of similarity of material and essence. Therefore, too much must not be made of the expression, and more read into it than is warranted from the words used. A shadow represents something, but is not the thing itself. It has nothing of the

substance of that of which it is the shadow. But before the creation of man had taken place, something else had transpired. In 1 Peter 1:18-20, it is stated that the Lord Jesus was the Lamb foreordained *from before the foundation of the world*. The word Lamb is only used in relation to our Lord in connection with sacrifice for sin. It has no other meaning. What, then, is suggested? Surely that long before the creation of man for this world, and long before this world was prepared for man, a council had been formed and an arrangement had been entered into that, in the event of such a thing as rebellion ever occurring in the world with its occupant man, the Son of God would hold Himself personally responsible to the divine government for such, taking upon Himself all the contingencies and liabilities in which the world might thereby be involved. "Fore-ordained to be the Lamb before the foundation of the world." To what a remote date this statement refers the purpose of the atonement! And why? Is there no connection between the creation of man in the image of God, namely, of the second person of the Trinity, and the purpose of that Person to be responsible for him and for the race in the event of the contingency of rebellion?

But the dire act of rebellion took place in the disobedience to God's word and will, as recorded in Gen. 2 and 3. Yet how simple was the will of God for Man. Only one restriction was placed upon him; but that one was sufficient to test his will and conscience toward God. Man fell; the law was broken; there was necessity for the maintenance of that law, and the vindication of the righteousness of the government that had enacted that law: the rebellion was in full view of the Universe. There were the countless myriads of unfallen loyal Intelligences and Angels that were specta-

tors of this rebellion. For them it was essential that the law should be maintained in all its efficiency and righteousness. Little is said in Scripture about this side of matters, but there is sufficient given to enable the mind to glimpse at the position. Under the words used by St. Paul, "Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, and every name that is named," is hinted the existence in the universe of these holy ones. To them the spectacle of rebellion must have been startling, but how much more so when they began to see the marvelous scheme of Sovereign grace to be wrought out by their Lord and Prince! No sooner had the emergency arisen, than the Son of God was upon the scene. They heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8). This was none other than the Second Person of the Trinity, for was He not the Word? Then commenced the preparations for the great mystery of the atonement and for the death of Christ as the Lamb fore-ordained from before the foundation of the world. At once sacrifice was inaugurated that the human race might learn, and possibly that the unfallen Intelligences might also learn, the process by which the sin of the world could be met and atoned for.

Sacrifice has in it no idea of *appeasement of the wrath of an offended and angry God*. Such an idea is not found in the Bible from cover to cover. That is purely heathen, and had crept in when human hearts had put God from their knowledge, and become darkened, as described in Rom. 1. Sacrifice was instituted to instruct in the great principles that sin had caused the forfeiture of life under the law of God and that only could the mercy of God reach by the substitution of one life for another. Satisfaction of law is a principle of government which is both divine and human. So the long list of sacrifices century by century

would silently but eloquently tell out the same solemn fact, and point to the One sacrifice for sins yet to be offered.

In the fulness of time came the Incarnation, when the Son of God entered into the human race, becoming identified with it in its condition of need and alienation. This fact is described in Rom. 8:3 as "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin." He in whose image man was originally made came into the human image of Himself, if one may be allowed the expression, in order to be responsible for the damage wrought by sin; in order to take upon Himself the whole liability, and undergo anything and everything that the Government of God had the right to impose. He had foreseen the whole contingency. He foreknew perfectly well that nothing less than the *death penalty* awaited Him. He was not taken by surprise. He was not innocently involved in some dire and unexpected difficulty and doom. To Him two things were unspeakably dear: First, the Righteousness of God. Second, the race created originally in His image. He came to fulfill all righteousness (see Matt. 3:15). He came out of love and compassion to the lost, guilty, and condemned world. The supreme difficulty was a governmental one. All pardon and mercy, if displayed, must be set above all possible controversy, all possible question and risk of dispute. It must be as solid and permanent as the throne of God. None but *He* knew divine requirements. None but *He* knew the measure of human guilt. None but *He* could undertake to let these two meet in His own Person. But offering Himself that such might be, there was no alternative but for Him to die under the sentence of God's law, by whatever process that sentence might apparently be carried out. With what wonder and awe may not the un-fallen holy ones have watched the carrying out of the an-

nouncement made to them, possibly, so long before, that their Lord would be the Lamb of God fore-ordained to be sacrificed for sin and provide Redemption.

Pausing here for further reflection do we not see that when the rebellion broke out in the world, which is but a small speck in the vast universe, a province merely of the Great Empire, there were two alternatives before the mind of God. He might in His sovereign will and power simply annihilate and exterminate the rebellious province of earth, and for ever extinguish it with all its infection. Or, He might devise some scheme whereby He might reconcile the world unto Himself. This latter would be an act of sovereign grace, undeserved, unsought, unexampled, unexpected, and would manifest a new and hitherto unknown attribute of His character. Were there no sin, there could be no grace. Were there no rebellion, there could be no reconciliation. Were there no transgression, there could be no pardon. Thus out of abounding sin has appeared abounding grace and love, which otherwise could have had no possible manifestation.

O 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,
The love of God to me;
It brought my Saviour from above
To die on Calvary.

It is to the infinite glory of God that He should thus seek to reconcile the world unto Himself by the death of His Son. Under such circumstances there can be no fault found with the morality of the Just One dying for the unjust ones, that He might bring them to God.

Christ came. He lived the life of absolute sinlessness on earth, proving that He knew and loved the law of God. He fulfilled all its demands and shewed how to love the

Lord God with all the heart and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength, and his neighbor as himself. Then was the heaven opened over His head on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the voice was heard: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The glory of His home streamed down upon Him and through Him; and it was as though the doors were flung open, and He invited to ascend there and then, and return to the bosom of the Father. But had He done so, He could have taken no one with Him. Moses and Elijah must be ever left behind. Peter, James and John, representative of all believers subsequently, must also be left behind. He would not thus depart, but conversed with Moses and Elijah of the other exodus, the other way by which He would leave the world. From another mountain top there would be another exit.

There is a green hill far away
Without a city wall;
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.

HIS OWN DESCRIPTION OF HIS DEATH.

In John 10: 17, 18, we find these words of His: "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." How shall these words be understood? Do they not emphasize all that has been already said concerning the governmental side of the Death? *Men* did not put Him to death. They were allowed to display all the hatred and malice that the human heart was capable of, and thought that they had complete power over the defenceless, helpless One. But as a matter of fact that was

not so. He laid down His life under the will of God, for the carrying out of the counsel entered into with God, and in order to fulfill the claims of the law against law-breakers and thus make a way for the mercy of God to reach and touch. In Matt. 27:50 a remarkable expression confirms this. In our English version runs the verse: "Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit." This last expression may be more properly rendered, "Dismissed his spirit." Some one has put it, "Commanded his spirit to depart." It accords accurately with His own statement, and points out again the mystery of the life given up and poured forth in agreement with, and fulfilment of, the original purpose. It disproves absolutely the idea that He died from natural causes; or that He fell a martyr to His opinions; or that He could not help Himself; or that His death was some unpreventable remarkable manifestation of love. If it was only this, then it was sheer waste of a precious life, for if He could have saved Himself, and did not, where is the revelation of love? Who is benefited if that is all? Neither was it an example for others to follow, for no other can die under divine wrath as He did. There is but one solution to the mystery. He gave up His life to the law of God for the expiation of sin, for the redemption of the World, to shield all who believe in Him from the possibility of death as the result of rebellion against the law of God.

At the Cross four predicted requirements were fulfilled.

First—The Death must be by the pouring out of the Blood. The blood is the Life. Life has been forfeited under the law. There must be irrefragable proof that life has been taken, and this is only possible when the blood has been poured out from the body.

Second—No bone must be broken. By stoning, by throwing Him over the brow of the Nazareth hill, bones would have been broken. Not so upon the cross.

Third—He must be lifted up between heaven and earth. Only upon a cross would this be possible with the other two requirements.

Fourth—He must die under the curse of God. Only one death involved a man in this. "Cursed be every one that hangeth on a tree." Thus and thus only could the four predicted requirements be accomplished.

Once more—What met Him when put to death?

First—He bore the sin of the world. As Isa. 53 describes it: "He bare our iniquities." "He bare the sin of many." "He bare our griefs and carried our sorrows."

Second—He was made the Guilt Offering. Made so by God and accepted as such (Is. 53:10).

Third—He was "made sin" (see 2 Cor. 6:21). It was as if He were guilty of all the sin that had ever been committed in the world. He was "made" it! And sin is the abominable thing that God hates. He was then hidden from the Father, and cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Fourth—The wrath of God fell upon Him. He sank in the deep waters; all the floods and billows passed over Him.

Fifth—He was then tempted by sin. Again and again was the suggestion flung at Him, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and come down from the cross." Could He? Yes, He could have done so as the Son of God, mighty and sovereign. But it were impossible *not* to do the will of God, *not* to obey the command to lay down His life and take it again.

Sixth—Human hatred was launched against Him, and had its manifestation of awful hatred and bitterness and irrational exhibition. "They hated me without cause."

Seventh—Satanic malice did its worst and utmost against Him. What a culmination of sin and hostility and wrath was at the cross!

The true preaching of the Cross will explain how it is that the sinner can be reconciled to God by the death of His Son, not God reconciled to the sinner, for God has never been unreconciled, but has ever been seeking and loving the lost.

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